

# LETTERS

IN

# ANSWER

23

TO

## DR. PRICE'S TWO PAMPHLETS

ON

## CIVIL LIBERTY, &c.

WITH

## SOME REMARKS

ON THE

## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OF

## LAST SESSION,

As they appeared in the News-Papers.

ALSO

Copies of Four Letters, concerning the Slavery of the  
Colliers, Coal-Bearers, and Salters in SCOTLAND.

ADDRESSED TO THE

## MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

In the Year 1774.

BY JOHN STEVENSON.

LONDON,

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## INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE the reader enters on the following Letters, I beg leave to acquaint him, that the two pamphlets on which they contain remarks, were published in 1776, and in 1777. All those on the former tract, with the first and second on the latter, appeared last year in the Public Ledger; and the remainder of the last series, as far as the fourteenth letter, have been published in the Morning Chronicle, beginning on the 16th of last December. Excepting those Letters which contain Remarks on the Debates in Parliament, they were all written before the month of January; but the great quantity of parliamentary matter, with several letters on temporary subjects, retarded their publication. Having gone so far, I was unwilling that any part of that which was prepared should be suppressed; and therefore I resolved that the whole should appear in the following tract. Considering doctor Price as a dissenting minister, I thought dissenters were in danger of being deemed disaffected to government, through his conduct; and therefore I entered the list with him as a protestant dissenter. That amazing degree to which the doctor had proceeded, in his opposition to legal government, rendered such a severity on my part necessary; which, had he been less daring, I should not have thought adviseable. When a minister of the gospel contumaciously overleaps the

boundary of his province, that deference which is otherwise due to his sacred character becomes forfeited ; and he must expect to be treated as an inhabitant of that ground on which he has placed himself. When endeavours are used to destroy all filial affection ; when doctrines are inculcated which have a tendency to exterminate all legal authority ; and when repeated attempts are made to render civil society a scene of *rapacity, anarchy, and carnage!* it is impossible that language too severe, can be applied to the author of such meditated devastation. Some may probably ask, why I have quoted so many passages of Scripture, in a political controversy ? In answer to such, I beg leave to observe, that, although the subject be of a civil nature, the Scriptures are properly applicable ; and, as the author whom I oppose is a clergyman, he is obliged to acquiesce in that authority, which some laymen, from the deistical disposition of the age, might probably attempt to turn into ridicule.

With respect to my Remarks on the Debates in Parliament, they have been confined to what has appeared in the news-papers ; and although some of the anti-government party may think that I have made too free with the parliamentary conduct of their demagogues, I am persuaded that the liberty I have taken is clearly justifiable on their own principles. However doubtful the right of publishing the debates may be thought, that of making remarks on such publications is, in my opinion, irrefragable. If, after many fruitless efforts to force the ministry to a resignation of their places, the leaders in opposition wish to rouze the people, by a promulgation of their senatorial speeches ; they must expect those whom they address to be variously affected, according to their different principles and dispositions. For my part, I freely confess that I have been rouzed ; but it

has

has been to an abhorrence of that conduct, in the minority leaders, which I apprehend to be big with ruin to the British empire. When they want to prevent government from enforcing its just authority over the American colonies, they expatiate on national bankruptcy and irretrievable ruin: but, when any of their own party becomes the object of honour and emolument, our national circumstances are instantly changed, and the very alarming state of our finances are made to quadrate with what they are pleased to style the necessity of public generosity and gratitude.

Although Great Britain stands distinguished by her generosity, justice, and lenity; and her revolted colonies are marked by their cruelties, oppression, and rebellion; yet our patriots have always reproached the former, and applauded the latter! A noble duke called Mr. Washington the saviour of his country; and a noble earl was pleased to style the congress as wise an assembly as any on the face of the globe: whilst tyranny, ignorance, and savage barbarity, are the terms by which they represent the conduct of injured Britons!—Nothing can be more opposite to my present purpose, than the answer which colonel Barré is said to have made to Mr. Rigby, concerning the government of the city of London.

“ He could not avoid saying, at this critical situation  
 “ of affairs, it was to the last degree impolitic to hold  
 “ forth any language to the public, which might tend  
 “ to destroy that unanimity which was at this juncture,  
 “ the only stay, the only hope of our political salvation.  
 “ To say that the poor, the low, the contemptible,  
 “ were at the head of affairs, could but give disgust to  
 “ those gentlemen, to respectable characters, in whose  
 “ hands the government of the city now is.”

This seems clearly applicable to the leaders in opposition: And I think it is impossible for any one more

pointedly to arraign their malignant conduct. If, at this critical juncture, unanimity be our only stay; the only hope of our political salvation; we cannot have a good opinion of those men, who have been strenuous and incessant in their endeavours to deprive their country of that stay; of that only hope. The British government is surely superior to that of the metropolis; and Britons at large are much more interested in the former, than in the latter. The empire is not dependent on its chief city; but that city has a necessary dependence on the empire. If depreciating the government of the city of London has a tendency to destroy our only hope of political salvation; the depreciating of the British government must have a far greater tendency to produce that direful effect. Whilst those who govern the city act as becomes them, I presume they will be duly respected; but if men will go abroad in fools coats, they have no right to be heartily angry although some of the spectators should venture to smile on such occasions. For my part, I wish not to give disgust to any; but I must say, that the anxiety of some men to support their co-adjutors in opposition, is really astonishing!—May all such party-spirit cease; and may Britons be henceforth joined as one man in promoting the public welfare.

When the duke of Richmond wanted to dissuade government from vindicating the honour of Britain, against the perfidious conduct of France, he could say that we were without ships and without seamen: but when a charge was to be supported against the noble lord who presides at the admiralty board, concerning a deficiency in the quantity of beer necessary to answer the demand of the navy at Portsmouth, his grace thought proper to declare that we had no less than twenty-one thousand men in one fleet. Those who cannot, in this glaring inconsistency, see a resolution to censure every measure of ad-

minis-

ministration, must be blind indeed. To say that we are without ships and seamen, because the whole of our navy cannot be manned at once, is a very unwarrantable mode of expression. A number of seamen, sufficient for manning the British navy, must either be kept in pay, or they must be had from the merchant service when they are wanted: to keep such a number in constant pay would be intolerably expensive; and, if the merchant service must furnish them, they cannot be immediately obtained. Our extensive commerce enables us to man a very powerful fleet on any emergency; but to furnish a number sufficient to man our whole navy, always was, and ever will be, a work of time. Government may impress into their service such men as they can find, but they cannot supply deficiencies by *creating* the numbers wanted.—Although I am convinced that the present mode enables government to procure good seamen, I hope some plan will be established, in time of peace, for manning our navy, without pressing, in case of another war. When I consider our seamen as the most valuable set of men in the British community, I must say that they are worthy of particular encouragement. The exigency of the state may warrant the compelling of their services; but, according to an established maxim, when private property is forced to give way to public utility, there should be an equivalent given. In my opinion seamen's wages in the navy ought to be augmented; and those in the merchant service limited: the latter to be sufficiently high to encourage foreigners to enter into our service; but not so high as to make our seamen in the navy apprehend that their private interest is materially injured, by their being obliged to stand forth in the defence of their country.

In the sixteenth letter, on the "Additional Observations," I have called our seamen "peerless sons of

“courage;” and, although I find that this appellation has been flatly contradicted by one of the British peers, I will venture to insist on its propriety. It has been said that, “it was using our officers and seamen extremely ill to suppose them *better* than those of any other nation.” But no seaman, I hope, will ever think himself injured by a character which is so peculiarly honourable, and so strictly just. As I firmly believe that British seamen are unequalled in point of ability and courage, I must entertain a very bad opinion of that Briton who dares to deny that superiority, which the world hath long been obliged to acknowledge.

When any of our ships of war happen to meet those of an enemy which greatly out-number them in guns, it is common for the British commander to ask his men if they are willing to fight? Let the noble detractor name the time that British seamen did not readily answer in the affirmative, give three huzzas to their commander in approbation of his courage, repair to their quarters with alacrity, and make the enemy soon sensible of their unparalleled activity, ardour, and intrepidity. In short, the superiority of our seamen is a matter so fully established, that should any of our ships of war yield to one of any other nation, equinumerant in guns, the commander would certainly be brought to trial by a court martial; and, unless it should appear that some disastrous circumstances had reduced him to the last extremity, he would be sentenced to suffer for cowardice or disaffection.—The British isle is called “the garden of God, whose valleys are like Eden, whose hills are as Lebanon, whose springs are as Pisgah, whose rivers are as Jordan, whose wall is the ocean, and whose defence is the *Lord Jehovah*.” May British hearts ever glow with love and gratitude to their munificent Creator; may we always experience his guardian care;

may our seamen continue unequalled; and may our navy ever maintain the command of our briny ramparts.

We are frequently told of a venal majority in parliament: but, supposing the fact to be true, I am convinced that the leaders in opposition are the cause of that which they make the subject of their complaint. Whilst men, instead of measures, are opposed, administration cannot exist without a constant majority; and, the stronger the opposition, the greater will be the necessity: for, as the late lord chancellor justly observed, the moment that the minority becomes the majority, they are the ministry. Administration may be compared to a candidate for a borough at an election; whilst none oppose him, he is willing to keep his money in his pocket; but as soon as one appears in opposition, with a heavy purse and a spirit to use it, he is obliged to resolve, either to give up the pursuit, or to wade.—How far? Why as far as his opponent shall think proper to oblige him. Had Britain no enemies to disturb her peace, her armies would be useless, and her navy an unnecessary expence.—When those who wish to be accounted patriots, shall confine their opposition to such measures as they apprehend to be wrong, they will then become real friends to administration, as well as to the public; and that venality, of which they so loudly complain, will no longer be absolutely necessary to the exercise of government.

Those passages which I have quoted from Scripture, in order to prove our obligation to civil rulers, are so clear, explicit and positive, that I cannot conceive how any who persist in a practical disobedience, can justly be said to have a proper regard for Scripture authority. Obedience to legal government is as clearly incumbent, as Scripture precept and example can make it. But this precept, like that which says “thou shalt not kill,” is not without its exceptions. Although obedience be a duty

duty positively required of every subject, yet I am far from thinking that even resistance to government, is, in all cases, unlawful. The justly exploded principles of passive obedience and non-resistance, make no part of my political creed. The good of society being the important end for which government was instituted, obedience must continue to be the indispensable duty of the governed, until government shall so far degenerate into tyranny, that the primary object of its institution appears more attainable by resistance. When it is the clear and general opinion of the people, that all the calamities of a civil war would be preferable to that slavery and oppression which must attend their obedience to government; then, and not till then, can resistance be deemed warrantable. But as resistance has a direct tendency to unhinge the constitution, that government must be highly tyrannical indeed, to justify the governed in subverting its authority. To run into a greater evil to avoid a less, is surely irrational: and to destroy the constitution in order to preserve it, is highly absurd. Resistance, in public society, is justly deemed a desperate remedy, because it imminently hazards its very existence. Disobedience and resistance being accounted at best but necessary evils; we should be fully convinced of the necessity, before we have recourse to the evil.

Our sham patriots have often told us that the unhappy war which now rages in our colonies, hath been occasioned by the tyranny of the British government. But a very small degree of reflection will sufficiently shew the injustice of the charge. The Americans have thrown off their allegiance to their lawful sovereign; but I will venture to say, that nothing has been done by our government to justify their revolt. Having grown wanton under our protecting hand, ambitious and designing men, on both sides the Atlantic, have had the art to

inflame their licentious minds with *imaginary invasions of their unalienable rights.* I am confident that I err not when I say, that our religion, our laws, and our liberties, never were more secure than in the present reign. This war is not waged in order to stretch the prerogative of the crown; but to enforce the just authority of the British legislature. To that authority they had long submitted, because they thought it their interest: but, unfortunately for us, Canada being subdued and *retained*, fear, for their own safety, no longer supplied their want of affection for their mother-country. Having become powerful, by the ill-judged liberality of their indulgent parent, they refused to yield obedience as subjects; and, instigated by the devil and their demagogues here, they have plunged themselves into rebellion and blood! Those heavy debts which we contracted in defending our colonies against the unjust attacks of France, ought to have increased their love and their gratitude: but alas! instead of proving an incentive to their filial affection, it hath so intoxicated them with pride and ambition, that we now behold them joining our natural enemies, in order to weaken, or destroy, their parent-state! Although I hope that we shall prove an over-match for France and America joined, yet I would avoid speaking positively concerning the issue of the war. Totally ignorant of many material incidents, until time presents them to our view, it is extremely difficult for us short-sighted mortals to treat on the subject of future events with any degree of precision. Success in war does not always attend the juster cause; nor victory crown the stronger side. The Almighty, for his own wise purposes, sends or suffers the horrid monster of war to rage among the sinful nations: and we have too much reason to conclude, that our sins have been the procuring cause of the present calamity. May we turn at the awful

rebuke;

rebuke; may we be reconciled to our offended *God*; and may we soon obtain forgiveness and peace.

With respect to the success and justice of the present war, much hath been said on both sides. We are told that the bishop of Peterborough, in speaking of the last campaign, said, "If this campaign has not proved successful; there is not one of your lordships who, I believe, ever expects that coercive measures will succeed: such an idea would be absurd." This I will venture to call a very absurd conclusion from the premises. His lordship does not say that Britain had then exerted her utmost strength in the contest, or that she would afterwards be less able to attack, and the Americans more able to repel; which, if fairly established, would have rendered the conclusion just.—I am sorry to observe that some, in the heat of their opposition, furnish several striking instances of inconsistence and absurdity. A celebrated member of the other house, in saying that general Howe made the ocean groan with the *retreating* British troops, must have forgot what he had just before asserted; namely, that they were *advancing* to the attack of Philadelphia: thus the orator, in setting forth the complaint of the oppressed ocean, paid a very high compliment to the *ardour* of those very troops whom he meant to depreciate.

Much has been said concerning the inseparability of representation and taxation, and some of the arguments on that head have been carried so far, as to surpass the comprehension of many an honest Briton. This principle, I beg leave to say, is not only new, but also erroneous. According to computation, there are not above four in the hundred actually represented in England; nor more than one in that number among the Scotch. If then, above ninety-seven out of every hun-

hundred, or about seven millions of people, in Britain, submit to taxation without being actually represented; it cannot be thought strange, that about one third of that number should, by voluntarily placing themselves at the distance of three thousand miles from the mother-country, be in the same predicament. But leaving representation and taxation for designing men to ring their changes upon, I beg leave to say that *protection* and taxation are incontrovertible correlatives. Of this matter I have treated pretty fully in my seventh letter of the first series; and I have the pleasure to find that this position was adopted, or laid down, by the bishop of Oxford on the 17th of last March. “ Taxes not to be paid as the price of ‘ protection,’ as his lordship justly observed, ‘ but the former to be agreed to as the means of enabling this country to afford the latter.’ ” An *unsupported* government is, or soon must be, a *non-existent* government. No subject on earth can justly claim protection from government, unless he be previously engaged for its support. Standing firm on this indisputable ground, I dare all the advocates for the American rebellion to the contest. The British government, supported by Britons, having nourished and protected the colonies during their infant state, are well entitled to call for their assistance now they are able to afford it. The declaring that their internal resources are great, and their bidding defiance to the power of that state which gave them their existence, afford incontestible proofs that we have been too backward in our demands. To say that Britons are constitutionally bound to enable their government to protect such colonies as are themselves free from every obligation, would be saying that Britons are *constitutional fools!* If the legislature has a right to put its hand in the pockets of seven million of Britons and take thence their money without their consent; but cannot legally

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command a penny from any of the American colonists, although the money required should be for the express purpose of driving the devouring sword from their own dwellings, surely the British constitution requires an immediate reformation. Had the Americans been willing to have assisted in supporting the British government, they would have made some real and definitive offers: when, by opposing the *acts*, and rejecting the proposals of the British legislature, they told us what they would not do; they would have declared what, and how far they were willing to perform. In demanding the enjoyment of British privileges, without being bound to the performance of duty, the revolted colonies have required that which no subject on earth has a right to possess: and, incited by a mad zeal for independence, they have involved the empire in an expensive and bloody war. I think it would be extremely imprudent in any Briton to wish that his fellow-subjects, in any of the remote parts of the empire, should be less free than himself: and I abhor the consummate effrontery of that remote fellow-subject, who arrogantly insists on his having a right to enjoy more freedom than the inhabitants of that country from whence he derives all his privileges.

The British constitution hath been wisely formed, by uniting the three different kinds of government. The monarchical is vested in the king, the aristocratic in the lords, and the democratic in the commons; and the excellence of the institution consists in that accuracy with which these constituent parts are adjusted. Under such a limited government, the republican is probably a much worse subject than he who is for absolute monarchy. If many tyrants are not only worse, but seldom reclaimed, than one; that man who endeavours to throw the whole power into the hand of the commons, acts much more imprudently than those arbitrary principled men

men who say, that all the governing power should be vested in the king. The preservation of the British constitution, in my opinion, depends greatly on the manly firmness and judicious procedure of the peers. They form the middle link which unites the two extremes of our constitutional chain; and, in case of difference or encroachment, it is the business of their house to act as a mediator, or to preserve the important equilibrium, by throwing their weight into that scale which would otherwise be too light. Among those who profess themselves advocates for British liberty, there are but few who pursue such measures as have a tendency to preserve that invaluable blessing. Instead of endeavouring to make government appear weak, arbitrary, and contemptible; they ought to do every thing in their power to render it able, mild, and respectable. In short, the best method to secure British liberty, is to preserve the constitutional *dependence* and *independence* of the *king*, the *lords*, and the *commons*.

The Letters addressed to the Members of the House of Commons, signed “A Friend to *True Liberty*,” were written with an intention to procure the emancipation of all the colliers, coal-bearers, and salters in Scotland; which, to the lasting honour of the present parliament, was happily effected in 1775: and they are republished in the close of this tract, in order to shew, that our champions for liberty have thought proper to wink at the most egregious *slavery*, when administration could not be charged as the author of it. The Scotch colliers, coal-bearers, and salters had never manifested that seditious disposition which seems necessary for meriting the attention of our patriots: they had always behaved as peaceable subjects; and, therefore, their cause was left to those who were friends to *true liberty*.

Whatever those who differ from me in opinion may

think of my design in publishing the following pages, I declare that I have not the least intention to excite the resentment of the public against any man: but that conduct, which I think injurious to my country, I wish to expose in such a manner as may most effectually prevent its pernicious consequences. Should any think meanly of my literary abilities, I can only say that I am beforehand with them: I think meanly of them myself; and am sorry, for the sake of that cause in which I have engaged, that they are not better. As writing is not my province, I should not have ventured to draw the polemic pen, had I not been convinced that my duty, as a Briton and as a protestant dissenter, required me to enter the list: should any accuse me of having proceeded on wrong principles, or of having made use of false reasoning, I declare myself ready either to own wherein I have erred, or to defend what I have advanced, according as the case shall appear.

I sincerely wish that all the ambitious, and infatiable sons of faction may seriously consider, that their sublunary scene will soon be finally closed. May they view the truly patriotic behaviour of our brave soldiers and seamen with admiration and applause: may American tyranny produce, at least, the modest blush; and may French perfidy be properly abhorred. May party prejudice come to a final end; and may all those who oppose government in future, make the interest of the empire the fixed object of their conduct. May those who wish to be accounted real patriots join in reducing the price of provisions, that the *poor* may sing and our *trade* flourish: may some wise plan be speedily formed for rescuing our *poor* and our *commerce* from the sangs of *luxury, dissipation, and vice*: may the important advantages prove lasting to the community: and may the names of its projectors be long held in honourable remembrance.

# LETTERS

IN ANSWER TO

## Dr. PRICE'S OBSERVATIONS ON CIVIL LIBERTY, &c.

### LETTER I.

Reverend Sir,

HAVING lately read your "*Observations on Civil Liberty*," and taken notice of those amazing lengths to which you have proceeded against your own country, in favour of our rebellious colonies in America, I could not avoid lamenting the hard fate of Britain; and I was much astonished on finding, that the daring parricide was a Dissenting Minister. Be assured, Sir, that I take no pleasure in holding up the faults of any of your class to public view; but, as the dissenting interest may suffer hereafter by your present Anti-British conduct, it is the duty of every Dissenter, who thinks himself aggrieved, to manifest his disapprobation; and, as I profess myself to be one of that number, I shall now proceed without any further preface, to make a few remarks on some parts of your pamphlet, and call for your defence.

In your account of the proceedings between our government and the Americans in the province of Massachusetts Bay, page 15, you conclude in the following words: "And all terminated in a government by the

“ sword. And such, if a people are not sunk below  
 “ the character of men, will be the issue of all govern-  
 “ ments in similar circumstances.”

Pray, Sir, are you not ashamed (not to say afraid) thus openly to abet the Americans, in their rebellion against the British government? And have you not, by approving of their opposition in such strong terms, sunk yourself much below the character of a good British subject? Reflect for a moment, Sir, on the duties of your office, as a minister of the gospel, and blush!

Not satisfied with your seditious attempts on the government of your own country, you have directed your baleful shafts against all those of the surrounding nations. In page 16th you say, “ All the nations “ now in the world, who, in consequence of the tame-  
 “ ness and folly of their predecessors, are subject to  
 “ arbitrary power, have a right to *emancipate* themselves  
 “ as soon as they can.”

Surely, Sir, you must have forgotten, that he whose minister you are, or ought to be, is emphatically styled “ *the prince of peace.*” I am afraid you do not yet know what spirit you are of. To endeavour to promote anarchy and bloodshed in Great Britain, is surely wicked; and to attempt to spread horror and devastation through the universe, is truly diabolical. In whatever spot of this habitable globe the *Almighty Author* of my being hath thought fit to order my birth, I am clearly of opinion, that the government of that country becomes my political parents and guardians; and, as such, must always hold themselves accountable to the munificent parent of the universe, who is universally allowed to be king of kings. That when I arrive at the years of maturity and reflect, that the preservation of my life, liberty and property, during my nonage, was owing to their protection; gratitude, as well as the laws of the

community, require my warmest acknowledgment and permanent support. Surely, it would ill become me to question that authority, to which, under Providence, I stood justly indebted for all that was dear and valuable to me as a man, and as a Christian. Was I in France, or even in Turky, I should think it my duty *to pray* for the peace and welfare of that government, which kept the freebooter and base assassin, at a distance from my property, and my life. But, in order to raise opinion into absolute certainty, I beg leave to try this matter by the unerring word of God.

All the kings of Israel were *absolute* in their sovereign capacity; and several of them reigned by the express and immediate appointment of the Almighty. Samuel, in describing the manner of Israel's king, exhibited such a picture of arbitrary government, that the subjects, according to your doctrine, must have been in a state of the most abject slavery. " Nevertheless, the people " refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, " nay; but we will have a king over us. That we " also may be like all the nations; and that our king " may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our " battles."

Here, Sir, I cannot help observing, that although the Israelites persisted so obstinately in subjecting themselves to the absolute authority of their kings, we do not find any of their posterity endeavouring to *emancipate* themselves. No Richard Price, it seems, with the pompous appendages of D. D. F. R. S. had arisen amongst them; nor had any such champion for liberty appeared in any of their succeeding generations.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Old Gravel-Lane, (71),  
Ratcliff-Highway,  
Jan. 3. 1777.

Your humble servant,

JOHN STEVENSON.

## LETTER II.

Reverend Sir,

IN my former letter, I presented you with some remarks upon your Observations on Civil Liberty, &c. and particularly on the following words in page 16, " And all the nations now in the world, who, in consequence of the tameness and folly of their predecessors, are subject to arbitrary power, have a right to emancipate themselves as soon as they can." In opposition to this doctrine, so replete with destruction to almost every state under heaven, I pointed out the obligation of every subject, to render cheerful obedience and support to that government which had protected them during their nonage: and I proved from scripture, that the Jewish government was monarchical. For though, on some particular accounts, they did murder some of their kings, we do not find that ever any attempts were made to limit the government of their successors. I shall now proceed to take notice of government as we find it to have been exercised among the Heathens; and then shew what we have recorded in the New Testament concerning our yielding obedience to the governing powers in general.

In the prophecy of Jeremiah, chap. xlv. ver. 5, 6, 7, and 8; and in that of Daniel, chap. v. ver. 18 and 19, we have two remarkable descriptions of that plenitude of power, with which the Almighty thought proper to invest Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. And, indeed, all the kings of the Heathens appear to have been absolute in their several dominions, so far as the sacred history gives any account of them. But what appears still more apposite to my present purpose, we

have

have recorded in the xiith chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, ver. 1, 2. and 4. " Let every soul be " subject to the higher powers. For there is no power " but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God. " Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth " the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall re- " ceive to themselves damnation. For he is the mi- " nister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that " which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the " sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a " revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth " evil."

Here, Sir, I throw down my gauntlet; and, completely armed with this irresistible weapon, dare you to the combat. There is no danger of mistaking the meaning of this text; it requires not any of your theological manufacturing to render it more perspicuous; it is already so plain, that " he who runs may read;" and it is as full against the general scope, and base tendency of your Observations, as words can be.—But again,

The apostle Peter, in writing " to the strangers " scattered throughout Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, " Asia, and Bithynia, says, submit yourselves to every " ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be " to the king, as supreme, or unto governors as unto " them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil " doers, and for the praise of them that do well."

" For the Lord's sake" is the argument used by the apostle Peter, to induce those he addressed to obey every ordinance of the governing powers: " for," as the apostle Paul says, " there is no power but of God; the " powers that be, are ordained of God." Here, Sir, the apostle Peter is likewise fully and expressly against you; he says, " submit yourselves," &c. whereas you in effect say, submit not yourselves to any of the ordinances

of man, unless it be for your own sakes ; that the people, not the king, are supreme, or as you have it in page 11, omnipotent ; and in page 16, you say, “ the “ Roman republic was nothing but a faction against the “ general Liberties of the world, and had no more right “ to give laws to the provinces subject to it, than thieves “ have to the property they seize, or to the houses into “ which they break.”

Antecedent to the birth of our Saviour, “ there went “ out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the “ world should be taxed.” And we find that our Lord, during the course of his ministry on earth, was so far from denying this right in the emperor, that he enforced it both by his precept and example. But “ art thou a “ teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things ?” Was I not satisfied that the duties of your ministerial office must oblige you frequently to consult your Bible, I should certainly have concluded, from your political performance, that you had been an entire stranger to that too much neglected book. We have many instances recorded in scripture of the Lord’s sending, or stirring up one nation against another, to chastise them for their sins ; and we find the devouring sword to have been as much the minister of divine vengeance as the pining famine, or the baleful pestilence. In the xxviiith chapter of Jeremiah’s prophecy, and 5th verse, the Almighty condescends to declare this right to such procedure, in the following words : “ I have made the earth, “ the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by “ my great power and by my out-stretched arm, and have “ given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And “ now have I given all these lands into the hand of “ Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon my servant ; “ and the beasts of the field have I given him also to “ serve him.”

You

You have thought proper to mention Mr. Locke and Dr. Priestley as being on the opposite side; and you tell us, they are excellent writers. But excellent, Sir, as they may be, surely you will not dare to compare them with those I have quoted. Whatever their weight and influence may be in the philosophical world, it will be found "less than nothing, and vanity," when opposed to clear scripture testimony in the Christian balance.

I am of opinion, that a monarchical government is always very favourable to the subject, when the sovereign is a good man: but when he happens to be of a contrary character, the consequences must frequently be dreadful. Thanks to the Almighty for our more excellent constitution. As we stand peculiarly distinguished by the favour of heaven, may our gratitude be conspicuous, and our lives exemplary: and whilst we lament the miscarriages and misconduct of the ministry, may we abhor every unprincipled, unremitting, and indiscriminate opposition.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble servant, &c.

### L E T T E R III.

Reverend Sir,

**I**N the prosecution of that business which I have followed from my youth, I have been much accustomed to contend with conflicting elements. And having now a temporary cessation from that very useful, although hazardous employment, I shall venture to step out of my province a little, in order to contend with the

disaffected party of our dissenting clergy. Whoever espouses the cause of America, now at actual war with this country, becomes, so far as he proceeds in that line, an enemy to the British community ; and, as I am one of that community, I must consider him as an enemy to *me*. In my last letter I offered a few remarks on your Observations on Civil Liberty, and I shall now beg leave to address you again on the same subject.

In page 19, you insinuate, " that the calling America *ours*, and saying that they are in a state of subordination to *us*," arises entirely from the habitude of speech. But is it possible, Sir, for any one, not altogether blinded by political prejudice, to believe you ? Dare you, in plain terms, say, that the colonies, as such, do not belong to Great Britain ? or, that their inhabitants are not subjects to our crown ? In the fore-cited page, you have bestowed some pains in forming a man of straw ; and you have afterwards thought proper to display your prowess in beating him soundly. You say, " The meanest person among us is disposed to look on himself as having a body of subjects in America, " and to be offended at the denial of his right to make laws for them, though perhaps he does not know " what colour they are of, or what language they talk."

However you may be inclined to presume on the peculiar credulity of your countrymen, you could never imagine that such palpable falsehood would be swallowed on your bare *ipse dixit*. I will venture, Sir, to say, you well knew, at the time you writ, that there were many hundred thousands of mean persons among us, who never had entertained a single thought of their being either *kings* or *lawgivers* ; though it is their great privilege to speak very freely of both. But you add,

" Such

“ Such are the natural prejudices of this country. “ But the time is coming, I hope, (you say) when “ the unreasonableness of them will be seen; and more “ just sentiments prevail.” Here, Sir, I beg leave to pause a little.—Amazement, surpassing all the powers of language, seizes me, while I endeavour to read over again, what I hope few of the yet known world are capable of asserting! You have, in other words, said, that the inhabitants of this country are naturally in a state of lunacy.—What matchless effrontery? What gross absurdity! And how shocking must such behaviour appear in one who styles himself an ambassador of the *Lord of Hosts*! Solomon says, “ The lip of truth “ shall be established for ever, but a lying tongue is “ but for a moment. Lying lips are abomination to “ the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.” These texts, Sir, are so plain that they need not any comment.

Pray, Sir, was there ever a time when the unreasonableness of those prejudices which you say are natural to this country, did not clearly appear? And can you believe that any one inhabitant of this peculiarly happy isle, not being a fool or a lunatic, could ever see them in any other light? But if such prejudices be natural in this country, what reason have you to hope that the time is coming, when the nature of Britain’s inhabitants will be so essentially and happily changed? Amidst such extravagance and absurdity, in one of your learning, I cannot help suspecting your hope to have had a much worse object. But, blessed be God, success attends the British arms; independence has now almost vanished from the deluded sight of our revolted brethren; and unsuccessful rebellion seeks a shelter for its guilty head.

May that almighty Sovereign, " who maketh wars to cease to the end of the earth, who breaketh the bow, cutteth the spear in funder, and burneth the chariots in the fire," command every destroying weapon into their places in peace. May our infatuated children, duly sensible of their parricidial conduct, humbly solicit for their restoration to the forfeited favour of the parent state. And may this country, willing to bury every act of past delinquency in perpetual oblivion, affectionately extend her maternal arms; and, as far as may be deemed consistent with future safety, receive, pardon, nourish, and protect, all our returning and repentant offspring.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble servant, &c.

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#### L E T T E R IV.

Reverend Sir,

I Again beg leave to trouble you with some further remarks upon your pamphlet on Civil Liberty, &c.

In page 19th you say, " The case of a free country branching itself out in the manner Great Britain has done, and sending to a distant world colonies which have there, under free legislatures of their own, encreased, and formed a body of powerful states, likely soon to become superior to the parent-state: this is a case which is new in the history of mankind; and it is extremely improper to judge of it by the rules of any narrow and partial policy; or to consider it on any other ground than the general

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“ one of reason and justice. Those who will be can-  
 “ did enough to judge on this ground, and who can  
 “ divest themselves of national prejudices, will not, I  
 “ fancy, remain long unsatisfied.”

On this, Sir, I shall briefly remark. If our American colonies are really Britain branched out; I must consider them as being cloathed with every privilege, and bound by all the obligations of British subjects, so far as their situation, with respect to the supreme government, can admit. Again, if those colonies have been sent to a distant world by Britain, we cannot avoid believing it to have been done with a particular view to the interest of the sender. Thus far, I think you have wrote agreeable to truth and the duty of a good subject. But, alas! what a strange and unaccountable change follows!—Pray, Sir, give me leave to ask what you mean by saying, that the colonies, under free legislatures of their own, have encreased, and formed a body of powerful states, likely soon to become superior to the parent-state? Had you really forgot what you had but just before said concerning Great Britain branching itself out, and sending colonies to a distant world? Or do you believe that these two are perfectly consistent?

You certainly know, that the British sovereign always constituted one branch of their provincial legislatures, until mad riot, and dire rebellion, prevented the due exercise of legal authority. Nor can you be ignorant, that the other two branches were, not only subject to the crown of Great Britain individually, but also dependent, even in their legislative capacity, on the same supreme, though, in that respect, more remote authority.

Would you not think that the British government acted a very unwise part, were they knowingly to suffer

suffer the colonies to become superior to the parent-state! And could you forbear blaming this free country for branching itself out, and sending colonies to a distant world, in order to become subject to their power and controul at some future period? Should ever such a case exist, it would certainly be new in the history of mankind; and I will venture to say it never could be justified, unless " by the rules of some narrow and partial policy;" for, " on the general ground of reason and justice," the supremacy of the mother-country, who transplanted, reared, and always defended them, ought ever to be maintained. Whoever will be candid enough to judge upon these rational *principles*, will, " I fancy," soon be satisfied, that the interest of Great Britain and that of her colonies ought never to be separated; and that, for the good of the whole, neither the military nor the naval power of the latter, should ever be suffered to become either superior, or any wise equal to that of the former.

Considering the colonies under the appellation of children, in page 21, you say, " children having no property, and being incapable of guiding themselves, the author of nature had committed the care of them to their parents, and subjected them to their absolute authority. But there is a period when, having acquired property, and a capacity of judging for themselves, they become independent agents; and when, for this reason, the authority of their parents ceases, and becomes nothing but the respect and influence due to benefactors."

That the colonies owe obedience to the parent-state, whose duty it is to rule, cherish, and defend them, is true; and so far the comparison may be held just. The last two, when the children arrive at maturity, and have acquired property, becomes reciprocal; the

first is binding upon the children through life, as to right, however reduced it may be in its exertion, either through inutility or want of power. Surely, Sir, you cannot believe, that at a certain period the governing bands of the mother-country ought to be entirely dissolved, and the colonies left to govern themselves independent of the parent state. A period indeed there is, at which every natural parent shall bid a final adieu to sublunary things, leaving their places to their offspring, with all that they possess on this terraqueous ball. But, Sir, is this applicable to Great Britain and her colonies? Or can you imagine that ever there was a colony settled upon any such principles or conditions?

Pray, Sir, by what authority do you say, that children are not to consider their parents as such, any longer than they are dependent upon them for their support and protection; and that the idea of paternity being at that period entirely dropt, filial affection and obedience becomes changed into that respect which is due to benefactors? Moses says, " he that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death: his blood shall be upon him." And the stubborn and rebellious son, who refused to obey the voice of his parents, was to be stoned to death by the men of his city, without any regard being had to his age or condition in life. How, in opposition to scripture, you could venture to advance a doctrine so subversive of those natural and moral obligations which should ever subsist between parents and their children, I shall for the present leave to the heart-searching *God*, and to your own conscience.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble servant, &c.

## L E T T E R V.

Reverend Sir,

**I**N my last letter I took notice of your having made some attempts to cut asunder the ties of nature, which unite parents and their offspring, in order to induce your readers to believe, that the authority of Great Britain over her colonies ought to cease, when the latter becomes capable of taking care of themselves; and I pointed out the fallacy of some of your inferences. I shall now quote a few more passages from your Observations on Civil Liberty, and crave your further attention to some short remarks.

In treating of the supremacy of the British legislature over the colonies, in page 24, you ask the following question: "Whether, if we have now this supremacy, " we shall not be equally entitled to it at any future " time?" You say, " They are now but little short of " half our number. To this number they have grown " from a small body of original settlers, by a very rapid " increase. The probability is, that they will go on " to increase; and that, in fifty or sixty years, they " will be double our number; and form a mighty em- " pire; consisting of a vast variety of states, all equal " or superior to ourselves, in all the arts and accomplish- " ments which give dignity and happiness to human life. " In that period, will they be still bound to acknow- " ledge that supremacy over them which we now claim? " Can there be any person who will assert this; or " whose mind does not revolt at the idea of a vast con- " tinent, holding all that is valuable to it, at the discre- " tion of a handful of people on the other side the At- " lantic? But if, at that period, this would be un- " reason-

“ reasonable, what makes it otherwise now?—Draw  
“ the line if you can.”

Here is such a mixture of fallacy and absurdity, as would disgrace the best polemic pen in the kingdom. Your question Sir, is, “ Whether, if we have now the “ right of supremacy over the colonies, we shall not be “ equally entitled to it at any future time?” And to which I answer positively, we shall; unless we should forfeit our supremacy, by refusing our protection when necessary, or give it up by mutual and general consent. Can you suppose that the British government would suffer their subjects, with their effects, to go, or, as you say, send them to a distant world, if such suffering, or sending, would necessarily free them from their subordination and obedience to the mother-country, whose obligation to protect them must nevertheless continue the same as before? To suppose any government to act a part so inconsistent with every idea of reason and justice, would be offering an affront to common sense; and can never, on a fair inquiry, be believed; however party-prejudice and political enthusiasm may induce some to plead. But to return to your question. If we have now the right of supremacy over our colonies, we cannot suppose it to depend upon their caprice for its duration; however it may be impeded in its exercise by any superior imposing power.

In your disquisition, you have shamefully changed the right of supremacy, into the power of maintaining it; and, in doing this, I cannot help suspecting you of having had a base design to mislead your unwary readers. You tell us that the colonies, by a very rapid increase, are now but little short of half our number. And from thence you infer the probability, that “ in fifty or “ sixty years, they will be double our number, and form “ a mighty empire?” What then? Why then, you think

think proper to ask, “ Will they be still bound to act  
 “ knowledge that supremacy over them which we now  
 “ claim? Can there be any person who will assert this;  
 “ or whose mind does not revolt at the idea?” Again  
 you ask, “ If, at that period, this would be unreason-  
 “ able; what makes it otherwise now?” And to crown  
 all, by way of defiance, you say, “ Draw the line if  
 “ you can.”

For my own part I think the above doth not deserve any answer; but lest you should differ from me in your opinion on this matter, the following short one, founded on your own principle, is at your service. The colonies are now, as you say, only half our number; therefore the mind of every person who, like you, measures the right of supremacy by the superiority of the number and power of the inhabitants of that country which claims it, must revolt at the idea of your boasted unreasonableness. Thus, Sir, the line is already drawn, and you have had the honour, such as it is, of performing that mighty deed! The insuperable difficulty has been overcome by your inimitable skill in calculation, and you have extended the important line precisely from one half, to double our number of Americans; or, which is to the same effect, from the present number of Americans, to four times so many. How you could think of propounding a question as unanswerable, which, on a principle of the most egregious ingratitude and injustice, had just before been so pointedly answered by yourself, is to me really astonishing! But, I presume, you knew that any thing which accompanied loud complaints against the government, would be swallowed with avidity by a too credulous multitude.

In page 37, you say, “ had we nourished and favoured  
 “ America with a view to commerce, instead of con-  
 “ sidering

“ fidering it as a country to be governed ; had we, like  
 “ a liberal and wise people, rejoiced to see a multitude  
 “ of free states branched forth from ourselves, all enjoy-  
 “ ing independent legislatures similar to our own ; had  
 “ we aimed at binding them to us only by the ties of  
 “ affection and interest, and contented ourselves with a  
 “ moderate power, rendered durable by being lenient  
 “ and friendly, an umpire in their differences, an aid  
 “ to them in improving their own free government, and  
 “ their common bulwark against the assaults of foreign  
 “ enemies ; had this been our policy and temper, there  
 “ is nothing so great or happy that we might not have  
 “ expected.”

Here, Sir, I would ask every attentive reader, whether the above does not appear more like the ravings of insanity than sound reasoning ? Should your very extravagant premises ever exist, surely it cannot require any uncommon degree of discernment to see, that your interesting conclusion must be reversed ; namely, that “ there is nothing so great or happy that *they* might not expect.” I delight not in reproaches ; but, in the present case, how is it possible for any man who hath the least regard for his king and his country to forbear ?

To see a reverend doctor descend from the dignity of his important office, and, with the most determined resolution, scatter firebrands, arrows and death, amongst his fellow subjects, confessedly the most happy and free people now under heaven, is enough to fill every human breast with detestation. Shall I be told that Great Britain, after striking terror into the surrounding kingdoms, by the vast expence of her blood and treasure in the defence of her American children, ought to prostrate herself, and desire those very children to use her as their footstool, in order to raise themselves into a state of unrivalled freedom, opulence, and grandeur ? Shall I be

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told this, I say, and not spurn at the proposer of such unparalleled injustice and madness?

Like too many in our houses of parliament, if reports are to be credited, you have thought proper to pass very high encomiums on the Americans, for that behaviour which I, and many of his majesty's loyal subjects, call *rebellious*: and sorry am I to say, that, in this spirit, there are several who proceed to very considerable lengths. When many of Britannia's valiant sons fell in support of our legal government, the slayers were rewarded with plaudits! But, on the other hand, whenever we are told that any of the rebel-host have yielded their guilty spirits under the just power of Britain's conquering sword, those who, on the former occasion, exulted, are, on this, ready to melt into tears! and the horrid cry of murder, is loudly sounded by many a rebel-tongue! Surely, Sir, you must know, that such behaviour tends directly to the prejudice of the mother-country, now engaged in an expensive war with her rebellious children; and that those who are capable of acting such an unnatural part, are, and ought to be deemed, manifest enemies to their king and their country. But, that I may not be thought too severe on this topic, I shall briefly observe, that such unjustifiable conduct must proceed, either from the weakness of their heads, or the badness of their hearts. If from the former, the unhappy subjects deserve our pity, and stand in need of our prayers: but if from the latter, the welfare of the community requires that they should be brought to condign punishment, whatever may be their rank or condition in life.

I shall now conclude with the following words of Solomon, *He that saith to the wicked, thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.*"

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble servant, &c.

## L E T T E R VI.

Reverend Sir,

**I**N my five preceding letters, addressed to you, I have made some remarks on passages contained in pages 11, 12. 15, 16. 19. 24. and 37. of your pamphlet, entitled, “*Observations on Civil Liberty, &c.*” the 13th edition; and as the confining myself pretty strictly to the passages severally considered in those letters, has prevented me from delivering my sentiments on the very interesting subject of your pamphlet so fully as I otherwise should have done; I shall now proceed to make a few observations on the conduct of the Americans, and their party here, with respect to Great Britain in general, and the government in particular; giving you free liberty to make such remarks on the premises as you may think proper.

I congratulate every loyal fellow-subject on the several very important accounts lately received from our American colonies; news at which every friend to Britain must unfeignedly rejoice, whilst her unnatural enemies, struck dumb with disappointment (I wish I could add, with remorse) hang down their dejected heads! To hear so many who are deeply interested in the present welfare and future prosperity of this island, openly abetting its avowed enemies in their most illegal and hostile proceedings, is, to me, matter of real concern and astonishment! Whoever duly considers the present situation of affairs between Great Britain and her colonies in America, must easily see the utter impossibility of wishing success to the latter, but at the expence of the former.

The Americans are now in a state of open rebellion against the British government; and at actual war with

every subject whose property comes within their reach. But a few years have elapsed, since Great Britain, at a vast expence of her *blood* and her *treasure*, drove the devouring sword, and more horrid scalping-knife, from their sleeping mansions. But alas ! how unsuitable have been their returns ! The objects of our then tender and parental affection, those *monsters of ingratitude !* are now in arms against their parent-state; and, as though strangers to every human tie, and destitute of every generous sentiment, they are bathing their murderous weapons in the blood of their former deliverers.

Some may indulge themselves in reviling their king, in counteracting the ministry, in subverting all legal government, and in sacrificing the dearest interests of their much injured, and now bleeding country, to the base designs of her most unworthy and rebellious children; who, availing themselves of their *ultra marine* situation, affect to fly from the *tyrannical* government of their parent-state, into the more *tender and indulgent arms of France*. Here we may justly take up the prophet's complaint, and say, " We have nourished and brought up children, " and they have rebelled against us." For my own part, I bless *God*, that I was born in Britain, and educated a Protestant; that I first beheld the solar ray in the reign of George the second; and that, under the mild government and safe protection of his illustrious grandson, I now enjoy civil and religious privileges, surpassing the subjects of every other state.

That the impropriety of human actions lie often hid, until the event has brought it into view, daily experience teacheth: and that our governors frequently do wrong, is a lamentable truth, which few I presume will attempt to controvert. Whilst the grand machine of our government continues to be managed by *fallible men*, we must not expect an unerring conduct. The human mind,

influenced by strong passions, and circumscribed, even in its most ample capacity, by very narrow limits, must frequently be biased and mistaken.

Although, in this peculiarly free country, the complaints of the people often run high against those who govern; yet the latter ought not to be deemed the only transgressors. Alas! the depravity of human nature is universal; different only in degree, the whole race of Adam lies under the same predicament. To the truth of this, the different motives, and the opposite views, which prevail among the fierce contending parties of the governed, afford an affecting proof. Hence I may venture to conclude, that should even Michael the arch-angel descend from heaven in human shape and assume the reins of government, yet would his angelic power and rectitude be very far from giving universal satisfaction; unless the governed should previously harmonize in their principles and pursuits, and an ardent love for their country prevail universally over private interest: or, in other words, unless the *Deity* would restore human nature to its pristine purity.

In this country an opposition to the ministry may, in many respects, be highly necessary: but surely they ought not to be opposed in every thing, unless we can reasonably suppose those who govern to be always in the wrong. If men must be employed and paid for the managing of our national affairs, let us not clog the wheels of government, by hindering the ministry from doing the most obvious parts of their duty; such conduct in private life would probably be deemed a proof of insanity, and a mad-house recommended as the fittest abode for the unhappy subject. Whilst the emoluments arising from the different offices in the gift of the crown continue high, a numerous band of the sons of avarice, dissipation, and riot, will always be ready to complain

loudly of the imminent danger into which the nation is brought by the matchless ignorance and malepractices of the ministry. But why we, who are placed at so great a distance from competition, should, without their motives, join so eagerly in their self-interested exclamation, merits our most serious and minute investigation. To such amazing lengths do people in general proceed in their complaints against the ministry, that a stranger, not otherwise informed, would be apt to think they were to the inhabitants of this island, what the devil is to the human race; their grand and most inveterate foe.

Let the gentlemen in opposition shut their eyes against riches and grandeur, those fascinating attendants on the high departments in the state; let a real concern for, and earnest endeavours to promote, the peace and welfare of the whole British empire, prevail universally over every sinister view arising from self-interested principles and party-prejudice; and, finally, let an unremitting exertion of their candid endeavours to prevent every servant of the crown from doing wrong, supersede that *Satanic* pleasure which has too often discovered itself on the misconduct or miscarriage of the ministers; and the change will be universally pleasing and profitable. Such *opposers* would not only enjoy the internal approbation of their own consciences, but the ministry themselves, sensible of the salutary effects of their well-meant seasonable opposition, would also approve of their conduct! whilst their *fame*, as men, as Britons and as patriots, flying diffusive, and unconfined to this happy isle, would resound through applauding realms.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble servant, &c.

## LETTER VII.

Reverend Sir,

MY last contained remarks on the very ungrateful and rebellious conduct of our American colonies, with some observations on the strange and unnatural behaviour of their advocates here. And, having something further to advance on the subject of our present unhappy disputes, I shall now offer my opinion with respect to the principles of public society.

Mutual interest is the firm and broad basis upon which every society is formed, and a strict adherence to that general principle becomes the indispensable duty of every individual. In every nation under heaven, however diversified by the particular modes or forms of their government, the governors, and the governed, are reciprocally bound to support each other. The people are obliged to support their government, which, in return, must rule and defend them ; and so closely and necessarily are these two connected, that the latter cannot exist without the former. The support of the government by the people, and the defence of the people by the government, must always be *co-extended*; and whoever claims the last, must at least be willing to contribute to the first.

Although this, to every unprejudiced person, must carry the clearest conviction, yet, amazing to think ! our brethren in America have held forth a very different doctrine. They have strenuously insisted that, in emigrating themselves, they carried with them all the common privileges of Britons ; and that they ought now to enjoy them in as ample a manner as though they were still resident here. To this I hope no friend to British liberty will ever object. But mark the difference, for

I stop not here. In behalf of Great Britain I also insist, that, with the *privileges*, they likewise carried with them all the *obligations* of Britons. These two being so inseparably connected, that no community, from the greatest empire down to the smallest dukedom, ever did, or can exist upon any other principles.

Happy would it be for the British empire, could some unexceptionable mode be formed for raising supplies in our American colonies. At present there can no more than five hundred and fifty-eight members sit in our house of commons; and they represent actually and virtually, not only all the inhabitants of this island, but also every individual throughout the colonies. An exemption by charter has indeed been pleaded, but that I conceive to be out of the king's power to grant. No grant from the crown can possibly put any of the subjects beyond the reach of the British legislature respecting taxation: even our statute laws, although enacted by all the three estates, are not, like those of the Medes and Persians, *unalterable*. The legislatures of the several colonies are only intended to regulate their own internal polity; and as each of them are totally independent of all the rest, the supremacy of the parent-state over them seems to arise, not only from right, but also from necessity. This, I think, is clearly proved by their constituting that *illegal* and most *tyrannical* substitute the *congress*; which, in consequence of a thirst for independence, has been invested, by its equally infatuated and rebellious constituents, with legislative powers.

If it be unquestionably true, that protection by government can never be required or expected, where support by the people is not yielded; the colonies, having always claimed and received the first, must be held clearly and justly bound to contribute to the last. This great and universal principle of mutual support, being thus

thus fairly established, the plea of non-representation, was it even granted, would only prove that there is a defect in the mode or form of our imperial constitution: and in such a case, I presume, it would much better become our brethren in America to offer their assistance for the true patriotic purpose of supplying that defect, than to plead it as a positive right of exemption from giving any assistance to the mother-country, in its supporting of that government from whom the colonies have always derived their privileges and protection. In your observations, page 37, you recommend to Britain, the aiding of the colonies in the improving of their own free governments, and the acting as their common bulwark against the assaults of foreign enemies. But pray, Sir, which of the two stands hitherto most obliged? Have we no right to expect assistance from our colonies? Must Great Britain, the most respectable kingdom now in the world, continue to load herself with every heavy burden, in order to aggrandize her American colonies; and yet those very colonies lie under no obligations to such an indulgent and generous parent? Think, Sir, on the number of lives lost, and millions expended by Britain, in the defence of our American colonies during the last war; and then answer the foregoing questions candidly. True, indeed, you ask, in page 21, " Will any one say, that all we have done for them, has not been more on *our* own account, than on *theirs* ?" Which I readily grant to be true; the British government would have been guilty of manifest injustice to this country, if their views had been different. But let it be remembered, Sir, that this laudable conduct of our government, is clearly founded on those principles which I maintain in opposition to yours.

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As every state has an undoubted right to prohibit the emigration of its subjects; no colonies can be formed without the consent, if not the protection also, of that government to which they belong. And if, as is generally allowed, the strength and grandeur of every kingdom consists principally, under Providence, in the number and opulence of their inhabitants; surely that government must be highly culpable, who either encourages or suffers colonization any further than it appears to be subservient to the interest of the mother-country. I readily grant that the colonists, not overburdened with patriotism, have always been actuated by very different motives, namely, those of self-interest: and I conclude from thence, that the more the national views of the government, and the private interest of the emigrants are made to coincide, the more fully will all the rational purposes of colonization be answered.

I am sorry to hear that many of the tribe of *Levi*, whose business it is to wait at the *altar*, have gone deep into our present political disputes, to the manifest prejudice of their country: and it pains me to think, that so many of that class (brethren of yours) among the protestant dissenters, are strenuously endeavouring to poison the minds of their hearers, by inculcating such political doctrines as are repugnant to the interest of government: that very government, under whose kind and effectual protection they worship *God* according to their consciences, none daring to make them afraid.—“O my soul, come not thou into their secret; “unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou “united.” To all such unworthy and dangerous members of the British community, I would recommend the serious consideration of the following portions of scripture. Rom. chap. xiii. 1, 2, and 4 verses; the First

Epistle

Epistle General of Peter, chap. ii. 13 and 14 verses; chap. ii. of the Second Epistle of Peter, and the Epistle of Jude.

I believe there are many Protestant dissenters among the Americans; and I also believe that several of their forefathers, in flying from persecution in this country, found an asylum there. But can the most enthusiastic amongst us imagine, that they derive the least shadow of a right from thence, to rise in rebellion now, against the mildest government the sun ever saw? For my own part, I hope that my earnest request of that Almighty Being, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice, shall ever be, that he would bless our most gracious sovereign in his person, in his family, and in his government; that his throne, ever surrounded by wise and good counsellors, may be established in righteousness; that all his enemies may flee before him, and the crown fit easy and long flourish on his royal head; that, when he shall have served all the wise purposes for which Providence intended him here on earth, he may receive a crown of glory which shall never fade away, eternal in the heavens; and that an uninterrupted succession of good, wise, and mighty Protestant monarchs, sprung from his illustrious house, may continue to sway the British sceptre over a free, a grateful, and a happy people, until time on earth shall be no more.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble servant, &c.

LETTER

## LETTER VIII.

Reverend Sir,

HAVING delivered my sentiments on the principles of public society, in my last, with some occasional remarks on your Observations on Civil Liberty, &c. I intended to have closed the whole, in this letter, by a short and serious expostulation with you. But, on looking further into your pamphlet, I found the injurious treatment of your country so glaring, in almost every page, that I determined to crave your attention to some further remarks.

In pages 38 and 39, treating of the advantages of our trade with our American colonies, you say, " That it has been one of the main springs of our opulence and splendour; and that we have, in a great measure, been indebted to it for our ability to bear a debt so much heavier than that which, fifty years ago, the wisest men thought would necessarily sink us. This inestimable prize, and all the advantages connected with America, we are now throwing away. Experience alone, can shew what calamities must follow. It will, indeed, be astonishing if this kingdom can bear such a loss, without dreadful consequences. These consequences have been amply represented by others; and it is needless to enter into any account of them—at the time we shall be feeling them.—The empire dismembered and exposed; the blood of thousands shed in an unrighteous quarrel; our strength exhausted; our merchants breaking; our manufacturers starving; our debts increasing; the revenue sinking; the funds tottering; and all the miseries of a public bankruptcy impending.

" At

" At such a *crisis*, should our natural enemies, eager for  
 " our ruin, seize the opportunity—the apprehension is ~~too~~  
 " distressing—let us view this subject in another light."

What a distressing description is here! What accumulated woe must the inhabitants of this garden of God experience, according to the predictions of our *wise calculators*! And what painful ideas must fill the soul of every Briton who happens to be credulous enough to believe them. It is, I presume, because our American trade is now become one of the main springs of our opulence and grandeur, that our government has determined to risk every thing, rather than suffer the colonists to rob us of it by a series of the most flagrant acts of ingratitude, felony, and rebellion. And I trust that, through divine assistance, they will ere long effect that very salutary purpose. You own that the ruin which the wisest men, fifty years ago, thought to be inevitable, has not come to pass; and, indeed, I cannot see any reason to believe, that the late predictions of a *three-penny conjuror* will prove more true. Blessed be *God*, none of those things, with which you certainly mean to terrify us, are likely to happen. Heaven has hitherto been pleased to favour our lawful endeavours; and American rebellion has repeatedly fled before a just exertion of British courage, like chaff before the impetuous blast. Thus hath the Almighty guardian of our happy isle, laid us under fresh obligations to love, admire, and adore *him*. But pray, Sir, if you are really afraid that " our natural enemies, eager for our ruin, should seize the opportunity," why have you taken such uncommon (not to say unwarrantable) pains, to call upon their attention? Your friends are daily endeavouring to impose upon us, if our unnatural enemies have not long ago taken the hint, and applied repeatedly for assistance to those very enemies,

which you call natural. Such, Sir, are the effects of the boasted *liberty* and *piety* of the Americans, under the poisonous influence of your doctrine. But, the apprehension of the above being too distressing "let us," say you, "view this subject in another light."

In pages 40 and 41 you say, "As far as, in any "circumstances, specie is not to be procured in ex- "change for paper, it represents *nothing*, it is worth "nothing. The specie of this kingdom is inconsider- "able compared with the amount of the paper circulat- "ing in it. This is generally believed; and, therefore, "it is natural to enquire how its currency is sup- "ported. The answer is easy. It is supported in "the same manner with all other bubbles. Were all "to demand specie in exchange for their notes, pay- "ment could not be made; but, at the same time "that this is known, every one trusts that no alarm "producing such a demand will happen, while he "holds the paper he is possessed of; and that if it "should happen, he would stand a chance for being "first paid; and this makes him easy. But let any "events happen which threaten danger, and every "one will become diffident. A run will take place, "and a bankruptcy follow. The destruction of a few "books at the Bank; an improvement in the art of "forgery; the landing of a body of French troops on "our coasts; insurrections threatening a revolution in "government; or any events that should produce a "general panic, *however groundless*, would at once "annihilate it, and leave us without any other me- "dium of traffic, than a quantity of specie scarcely "equal in amount to the money now drawn from "the public by the taxes. It would, therefore, be- "come impossible to pay the taxes. The revenue "would fail. Near a hundred and forty millions of

" property would be destroyed. The whole frame  
" of government would fall to pieces; and a state  
" of nature would take place."

Is this your method of viewing our interesting affairs in a less distressing light? Here, Sir, you have exhibited a most affecting account of our private and public situation: and you either believed it to be true, or you did not. If you did believe it to be true, it certainly became you, as a member of the British community, to have endeavoured to avert the threatening danger. Now, Sir, I ask you seriously, whether this has really been your aim? If it has, I cannot help lamenting the extreme weakness of your head. If it has not, what must the indignant reader think of your heart? You say that any events, which threaten danger, will occasion a diffidence in the paper-holders. " A run will take place, " and a bankruptcy follow." Can you lay your hand upon your breast and say, in the face of heaven, that you have not exerted the utmost powers of your soul, in order to fill the minds of your readers with apprehensions of inevitable ruin. You have said, that the specie of this kingdom is inconsiderable, compared with the amount of the paper circulating in it. That our paper currency is a *bubble*. That the only way to secure specie in exchange for it, is to be first in the demand; for that *all* cannot be paid.

Pray, Sir, how came you to know what quantity of specie there is now in this kingdom? Hath each individual transmitted you an accurate account of the sums which they severally hold? Or are you endowed with an all-pervading eye to see and examine the exact contents of every repository? As the human mind cannot believe but upon some degree of evidence, I shall here take the liberty to tell you, that he who would command my assent must first inform my judgment.

You

You say that nothing can be more delicate or hazardous than our paper circulation. And that any events producing a general *panic*, however groundless, would at once annihilate it. What then? May we not, like France, when the Mississippi bank broke in 1720, hope to overcome the dreadful misfortune? No, says the learned Dr. Price, “the whole frame of government would fall to pieces; and a state of nature would take place.”—Dreadful catastrophe indeed! Tell it not in Madrid, publish it not in the streets of Paris, lest all our enemies rejoice. You have certainly done your utmost to produce that *panic*, which you say would at once annihilate the British constitution: but, thanks to our almighty *Parent*, who hath been pleased to render such shocking machinations abortive.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble servant, &c.

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#### L E T T E R IX.

Reverend Sir,

MY last contained some short remarks on your bold efforts to destroy all private and public credit; to dissolve the whole frame of our excellent constitution; and to reduce every member of this peculiarly happy and much envied community, to their primordial state. If I have delivered my sentiments upon that interesting subject with some degree of seeming asperity, it has been owing to the ideas which I unavoidably entertained of your extreme culpability. And, as I find you have had a strange propensity to dwell upon that destructive topic, I shall now beg leave to follow you, by making a few further remarks.

In

In pages 44 and 45, after telling us that our paper circulation and the public revenue reciprocally support each other, you say, " The bank is the support of our " paper; and the support of the bank is the credit of " government. Its principal securities are a capital of " eleven millions lent to government; and money con- " tinually advanced to a vast amount on the land-tax, " and malt-tax, sinking-fund, exchequer bills, navy bills, " &c. Should, therefore, deficiencies in the revenue bring " government into any difficulties, all these securities " would lose their value, and the bank, and government, " and all private and public credit would fall together. " Let any one here imagine, what would probably follow, " were it but suspected by the public in general, that " the taxes were so fallen, as not to produce enough to " pay the interest of the public debts, besides bearing " the ordinary expences of the nation; and that in " order to supply the deficiency, and to hide the cala- " mity, it has been necessary in any one year to antici- " pate the taxes, and to borrow of the bank.—In such " circumstances I can scarcely doubt, but an alarm " would spread of the most dangerous tendency.—The " next foreign war, should it prove half as expensive as " the last, will probably occasion such a deficiency; and " bring our affairs to that crisis, towards which they " have been long tending. But the war with America " has a greater tendency to do this; and the reason is, " that it affects our resources more; and is attended " more with the danger of internal disturbances."

Here, Sir, I am willing to meet you upon your own ground: having no inclination, at present, to attempt a refutation, I shall suppose the very unfavourable picture which you have drawn, to be true in every particular. I shall for once admit, that a deficiency in the revenue would necessarily occasion the total overthrow of the

bank and government, with all private and public credit. I will likewise suppose, that were it but suspected by the public in general, that the taxes were so fallen, as not to produce enough to pay the interest of the public debts, besides bearing the ordinary expences of the nation ; an alarm would spread of the most dangerous tendency. And then I ask you seriously, whether your proceedings in this matter have been more likely to prevent, or to promote, that dire suspicion ? You certainly know that what you have hitherto said, stands in the latter predicament ; and, from your own premises, I may fairly conclude, that you are an enemy to Britain and unworthy of its privileges. I am persuaded that I err not when I say, you have done your utmost to raise that *suspicion*, and strike that *panic*, which, according to your own predictions, would put a final period to our government, and spread desolation and ruin throughout the British isle.

In order fully to justify any action, three things are essentially necessary ; namely, the principle from which, the end to which, and the manner how, it is performed. If love to your country was your motive, and its interest your aim, surely the method you have pursued, has been well calculated to defeat that laudable design. Solomon says, “ answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him ;” and in the next verse he adds, “ answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.” In reconciling this literal contrariety, you will clearly condemn your own political conduct. If our situation be so very deplorable as you have set forth, surely you have exposed it to public view, at a season the most improper that could have been chosen. You say your apprehensions, that our natural enemies will seize the opportunity of our present unhappy disputes, are too distressing : and yet you

you scruple not at the same time to tell them that another war, half so expensive as the last, would ruin us.

Here, Sir, it should be remembered, that we entered into the last war in the defence of our American colonies; and that very *peer* to whom you say, “this kingdom “ often looked as its deliverer,” saddled it with more debt, and consequently with more taxes, than any two of his predecessors. But he is the principal advocate for the Americans, and therefore you deplore his present ill state of health which prevents him from being active in their behalf. You say that the war with America has a greater tendency to ruin this country than a foreign war; because “it affects our resources more, and “ is attended more with the danger of internal disturbances.” If the danger of internal disturbances be greater in the present war, surely every Briton ought the more heartily to aid and assist the government in their endeavours to prevent them. Dare you say, that this has been your practice? On the contrary, have you not, by reducing the price of your pamphlet, so widely disseminated the seeds of disaffection, that real christianity and true patriotism, must blush for your conduct.—But to proceed.

In page 46, treating of our national debt, you say, “Had we continued in a state of profound peace, it “could not have admitted of any diminution. What “then must follow, when one of the most profitable “branches of our trade is destroyed; when a third of “the empire is lost; when an addition of many millions is made to the public debt; and when, at the “same time, perhaps, some millions are taken away “from the revenue? I shudder at this prospect. A “kingdom on an edge so perilous, should think of nothing “but a retreat.”

You might as well, Sir, have said, that a kingdom on an edge so perilous should think of nothing but abandoning itself to the most abject *pufillanimity* and deep *despair*, and then your real design would have appeared obvious to every reader. In short, Sir, if your account is to be credited and your advice followed, we must look upon Great Britain as being already so overburdened, that, rather than engage in another war, she ought tamely to submit to every injury which either our natural enemies, or our now revolted colonies may think proper to offer. Can Britons, without emotion, think of being reduced to a situation so truly humiliating? And will any real friend to this country say that the daring adviser of a conduct, so superlatively disgraceful and ruinous, ought to be *applauded*? Were it not for the very peculiar lenity of that government which you and others falsely accuse of tyranny, I am persuaded that self-preservation would speedily induce you to *flee* to some remote clime, lest awakened *justice* should overtake you.

That we are now much burthened with the debts contracted in defending our American colonies against the assaults of France, is true: and by this we may be allowed to ascertain the magnitude of their present guilt. Instead of offering their assistance to reduce that heavy load, which their heroic and liberal parent had contracted on their account, they have endeavoured to take a base advantage of her incumbered situation. All who are friends to justice must surely abhor their conduct: and I hope that every Briton, who is a real lover of his country, will exert himself to the utmost, rather than suffer such monsters of ingratitude to carry their wicked schemes into execution, or to escape with impunity.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble Servant, &c.

## L E T T E R X.

Reverend Sir,

IN my last I attended you through a most shocking delineation of our national danger. I made some remarks on the daring exertion of your ill-timed eloquence on the subject. And I shewed, from your own words, that the whole was evidently calculated to annihilate our paper currency, to overthrow the British constitution, and to involve every individual throughout this happy kingdom, in anarchy and destruction. I shall now proceed to make some further remarks on your Observations on Civil Liberty, &c.

In page 49, you say, " The colonies are persuaded that they are fighting for liberty. We see them sacrificing to this persuasion every private advantage. If mistaken, and though guilty of irregularities, they should be pardoned by a people whose ancestors have given them so many examples of similar conduct. *England* should venerate the attachment to liberty amidst all its excesses; and, instead of indignation or scorn, it would be most becoming them, in the present instance, to declare their applause, and to say to the colonies—We excuse your mistakes, we admire your spirit. It is the spirit that has more than once saved *ourselves*. We aspire to no dominion over you. We understand the rights of men too well to think of taking from you the inestimable privilege of governing yourselves; and, instead of employing our power for any such purpose, we offer it to you as a friendly and guardian power, to be a mediator in your quarrels, a protection against your enemies, and an aid to you in establishing a plan of

“ liberty that shall make you great and happy. In return, we ask nothing but your gratitude and your commerce.”

“ This,” Sir, you are pleased to say, “ would be a language worthy of a brave and enlightened nation.” But pray, Sir, give me leave to ask, whether you think it would be a language worthy of a nation already brought so near to the brink of ruin, by the repeated exertions of its prowess in favour of the colonies, that it no longer retains the power of enforcing their due obedience? Have not those very colonies already bid defiance to the British government? And have you not told us that a kingdom on an edge so perilous should think of nothing but a retreat? In pages 40, 41, and 45, you say, that a bare suspicion, or a panic, would dissolve the whole frame of our government; and that nothing but a *bubble* interposes between Great Britain and inevitable ruin. But now, for very obvious reasons, you are pleased to style us a brave and enlightened nation. Thus, Sir, you endeavour, at one time to frighten us by false representations of our impotence and danger; and, at another time, you attempt to cajole us by the most flattering expressions of our dignity and importance. Shameful behaviour indeed! and totally incompatible with the duties of your ministerial office. What, Sir, hath truth no charms to engage you on her side? Has the future peace and welfare of your own country no influence over your political conduct? And will your deep-rooted predilection for our rebellious brethren in America, be satisfied with nothing less than a flagrant breach of all your obligations to *God* and your country?—But to be more particular.

You say, “ the colonies are persuaded, that they are fighting for liberty.” I say, that however they may have been originally imposed on by you and other popular *deceivers*, many of them are now made very sensible that they

they have been fighting for *tyrants* and *oppressors*. I can readily admit that they are sacrificing *many* private advantages; but I flatly deny that such was their original intention. Their returning to their duty will be the most effectual means of putting an end to such sacrifices; and I doubt not but our government will form such a plan as may reasonably be expected to prevent the return of such a calamity.

I cannot see any just objection to the pardoning of all the irregularities of our American brethren which have proceeded from *mistaken* notions of liberty, provided that they declare their *repentance* and promise amendment. But I cannot, consistent with my duty as a man and a Christian, approve, much less *venerate* and *applaud*, their attachment to liberty in all its *excesses*. Shall a minister of the gospel dare to advance a principle, which, if established, would furnish a plea for almost every species of riot and villainy; dissolve all the bands of society; break down every fence of property and life; and spread horror and devastation throughout the world. The words in which you advise England to address the colonies, are pretty similar to that conduct which you recommend to Britain, in page 37, already considered; and both of them are so directly repugnant to sound reasoning, that, in my opinion, they would much better become an unfortunate inhabitant of the great house in Moor-fields, than one who stately occupies a Christian pulpit.

In page 50, you say, “ It often happens in the political world, as it does in religion, that the people who cry out most vehemently for liberty to themselves, are the most unwilling to grant it to others.”

Here, Sir, I have the pleasure of coinciding with you exactly. But I beg leave to ask, who cries out most vehemently for liberty to themselves? The answer is extremely easy, for, as Nathan said to the guilty and

self-condemning monarch, “ *thou art the man.*” You certainly know that you, and your party, are almost mad in favour of liberty to yourselves, and yet the most unwilling to grant it to others. The distinguishing characteristic of true liberty is, an allowance of enjoyment to all other persons, every way equal to that which we claim to ourselves. Compared with this rule, how devious will modern liberty appear? Our patriots too commonly claim a right to enslave their fellow-subjects; and whoever dares to oppose their arrogance, by insisting on an equal right to freedom of sentiment and action, are immediately held up to the public, as favourers of a tyrannical government, and enemies to the British constitution.

Treating on the courage of the Americans, in the page before quoted, you say, “ No one can doubt, but that, “ had it been believed some time ago, that the people in “ America were brave, more care would have been taken “ not to provoke them.”

With respect to the courage of our American brethren, their trial, during the last war, enabled us to form a pretty good judgment of it. And, had they talked as highly of their abilities for war then, as they and their advocates here have done lately, I make no doubt but we should have required a much greater exertion of them in their own defence. By such a conduct, Britain might have saved much of her blood and treasure; and the colonies would have had a greater opportunity of gaining immortal honour.

I am, Reverend Sir, your’s, &c.

## L E T T E R XI.

Reverend Sir,

HAVING taken notice, in my last letter, of your observations with respect to the colonies, being persuaded that they were fighting for liberty, and also made some remarks on your asserting that *England* should venerate and applaud their attachment to it amidst *all its excesses*, I shall now beg leave to consider what you have advanced concerning the probability of our succeeding in the war with America.

In page 51, you say, “ Our own people, being unwilling to enlist, and the attempts to procure armies of Russians, Indians, and Canadians having miscarried, the utmost force we can employ, including foreigners, does not exceed, if I am rightly informed, 30,000 effective men. Let it, however, be called 40,000, this is the force that is to conquer half a million, *at least*, of determined men, fighting on their own ground, within sight of their houses and families, and for that sacred blessing of liberty, without which, man is a beast, and government a curse. All history proves that in such a situation, a handful is a match for millions.”

The falsity of this account is so exceedingly striking, in almost every particular, that, were it not that many are so astonishingly blinded by prejudice as to pronounce your pamphlet altogether unanswerable, I should think myself fully justified in turning from this part of it with silent contempt. I know of no particular unwillingness in our own people either to enlist or fight. We know that numbers have actually enlisted; and the spirited behaviour of our armies in America hath often been applauded.

Can

Can you hear of the bravery of our troops, on the other side of the Atlantic, without taking shame to yourself? And doth not the gallant behaviour of our honest seamen pain you to your inmost soul? We have been told that many of the latter, belonging to the transports, animated with a laudable zeal for the welfare of their country, voluntarily offered their services on the most important, difficult and perilous occasions. These, Sir, are our real patriots; they have effectually strengthened the hands of government in their country's cause, whilst you, and others, have been basely endeavouring to counteract them.

You know we *can* employ more than 40,000 men against the Americans. We certainly did employ more in the last campaign; and I dare say you believe we shall employ many more in the next. I readily own, however, that our troops, even when augmented, cannot be expected to conquer half a million of determined fighting men, either within or without sight of their houses and families. But I hope you will excuse me, if I should doubt the truth of your assertion respecting their numbers. To be plain with you, I cannot entertain a doubt of its being false; and further, I cannot conceive how you could believe it yourself. I do not pretend to say, with any degree of precision, how many men the Americans have had under arms; but, if they have ever amounted to a fifth part of your number, I will venture to say they have not been all *fighting* men. If we credit their own accounts, the troops actually opposed to ours in the field, have always been much inferior in point of numbers; but perfect prodigies of valour. The main body, it seems, had always determined to keep at a trembling distance, lest any of our mischievous missives should have reached them.—But you say they are fighting. “ for that sacred blessing of liberty,

“ without which, man is a *beast*, and government a  
“ curse.”

Here, Sir, I make a solemn pause.—Shall man, the noblest being in all the visible creation, be called a *beast*; and none endeavour to make the impious assertor ashamed of his falsehood? It is *reason* which eminently distinguishes our species from those of the brute: and men are figuratively said to be beasts, when, through intemperance or passion, they divest themselves of the proper use and exercise of that faculty which constitutes the difference. But that the loss of liberty, by the act of another, can possibly turn men into beasts (unless the American custom of tarring and feathering be added) I call upon you to prove. Your position, not only reduces all who have lost their personal liberty, to a level with the beasts; but it also tends to cut the very sinews of society. In order to bring this matter more clearly home to you, I shall shew that your assertion, was it true, would extend to every subject; for that none can be free, according to your definition of liberty.

In page 6th, you say, “ as far as, in any instance, “ the operation of any cause comes in to restrain the “ power of self-government, so far slavery is introduced: “ nor do I think, that a preciser idea, than this of “ liberty and slavery, can be formed.”

In direct opposition to this I insist, that so far as, in any instance injurious to the state or its members, the operation of the law comes *not* in, to restrain the self-government of the delinquent, so far a destructive slavery to his will is introduced. Your position, Sir, is as weak as it is pernicious, and ought to be reprobated by every member of society. Must robbery, murder, and every species of wickedness be suffered to reign, lest what you are pleased to call slavery should be introduced, by restraining

straining the power of self-government in the perpetrator?

In pages 7 and 9, you say, " In every free state every man is his own legislator.—In general, to be free, is to be guided by one's own will; and to be guided by the will of another, is the characteristic of servitude."

I beg leave, Sir, to deny both your assertions. There is not a state now under heaven, wherein every member is his own legislator. You must know, that the first and the most obvious principles of every society are calculated to prevent that dreadful consequence. In every public act, where there is any opposition, the majority gives law to the minority; and the latter, according to the principles of sound policy, must be guided by the will of the former. And both, with their descendants, must continue to yield obedience until it is formally repealed, whatever their wills, under any undue influence, may urge to the contrary. I will venture to say, that there is not a member of society now existing, who is not obliged to yield obedience to several laws and regulations, which he either had no hand in framing, or else opposed when they were under consideration. Thus, Sir, you have stripped all the known world of liberty, and branded every member of society with the detestable epithet of beast: and all this, for no other purpose, than to enable you to *curse* government with a better grace.

In the page before quoted, you say, " There is in this case an infinite difference between attacking and being attacked; between fighting to destroy, and fighting to preserve or acquire liberty. Were we, therefore, capable of employing a land force against America equal to its own, there would be little probability of success. But to think of conquering that whole continent with 30,000 or 40,000 men to be

“ be transported across the *Atlantic*, and fed from hence,  
 “ and incapable of being recruited after any defeat—  
 “ This is, indeed, a folly so great, that language doth  
 “ not afford a name for it.”

As you ventured, *a priori*, to determine our missing of success, from the presumed injustice of our cause; surely I may be allowed, *a posteriori*, to infer the justice of our cause, from the success of our arms; more especially as you say it coincides with history, which “ proves that in such a situation, a handful is a match for millions.” You say, that were 500,000 troops employed against America, there would be little hopes of success. But is it possible, Sir, for you to believe your own assertion? For my part I am of opinion, that such a number would light on them as the dew falleth on the ground: and that, of all that mighty army which you have so pompously exhibited on paper, there would not be left so much as one.

When you speak of feeding our army from this country, I presume you would have us to believe, that the fertile lands of America will refuse to yield their increase to such lawless invaders. But pray, Sir, how came you to throw an impassable bridge across the vast Atlantic Ocean, in order to prevent our ships from supplying those deficiencies which the devouring sword and the ravages of disease must, in some degree, occasion in our armies? This, to use your own words, is, indeed, a folly so great, that language doth not afford a name for it.

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

## LETTER XII.

Reverend Sir,

MY last letter contained remarks on what you have advanced in your Observations on Civil Liberty, &c. concerning the probability of our succeeding in the war with America: and, as I find you have proceeded in a very inconsistent and unwarrantable manner, I beg leave to trouble you with a few further remarks upon the subject.

After admitting, in page 52, that our troops, with the assistance of our ships of war, would get possession of the American maritime towns, you say, " As to their trade, having all the necessaries and the chief conveniences of life within themselves, they have no dependence upon it; and the loss of it will do them unspeakable good, by preserving them from the evils of luxury and the temptations of wealth; and keeping them in that state of virtuous simplicity which is the greatest happiness. I know that I am now speaking the sense of some of the wisest men in America. It has been long their wish that Britain would shut up all their ports. They will rejoice, particularly, in the last restraining act. It might have happened, that the people would have grown weary of their agreements, not to export or import. But this act will oblige them to keep their agreements, and confirm their unanimity and zeal. It will also furnish them with a reason for confiscating the estates of all the friends of our government among them."

What, Sir, will our government's doing that which you say the wisest men in America have wished them to do, furnish those men with the least shadow of a reason for

for confiscating the estates of all the friends of government among them? Is the hope of seizing their neighbour's property, the principal cause of their rejoicing in the last restraining act? Is this *your* method of confirming their unanimity and zeal? If you excite one party of the Americans to take the property of the other, merely because they are friends to our government, you not only prove their want of unanimity, but make them look as like rogues as they possibly can stare! Pray, Sir, can you here consider the friends of our government as being " guided " by their own wills; " or as acting as " their own legislators?" I hope, for the sake of Christianity and common-sense, you will freely own that you cannot. Their estates cannot be said to be given, but forcibly taken from them by your *pious* conservators of liberty! This, Sir, is surely a restraining of the power of self-government in the sufferers; and as repugnant to your definition of liberty, so far as it concerns them, as the east is opposite to the west. Nay, it is as contrary to every species of true liberty, as tyranny, oppression and robbery can make it.—But, " the people who cry out so vehemently for liberty to themselves, are the most unwilling " to grant it to others."

Concerning the Americans' loss of trade, you say, in the page before quoted, " Their ships, before useless " and consisting of many hundreds, will be turned into " ships of war; and all that attention which they have " hitherto confined to trade, will be employed in fitting " out a naval force for their own defence; and thus the " way will be prepared for their becoming, much sooner " than they would otherwise have been, a great maritime " power."

Is it possible, Sir, for you to believe all this? One would really think that your principal design here, is

to try the credulity of your readers. You venture to predict, as a certainty, that which is as impossible as the ridiculous engagements of the famous bottle-conjurer! Why should the Americans fit out a naval force for their own defence, after " their maritime towns are either " abandoned to us or destroyed, and themselves removed " to safer situations?" Or, in other words, after they have nothing left to be defended? Again, how is it possible for them ever to become a great maritime power, or even to keep a single ship of war, when destitute of trade and without sea-ports? If the sense of your *wise* and *wishing* correspondents, in America, has led you into this train of absurdity, you are, in my opinion, but little obliged to them.—Assemble yourselves, all ye admirers of the learned doctor Price, and jointly deplore the egregious blunders of your mighty champion!

In page 53, comparing our colonies with the mother-country, you say, " In America we see a number of rising " states in the vigour of youth, inspired by the noblest of all " passions, the passion for being free; and animated by " piety.—Here we see an old state, great indeed, but " inflated and irreligious; enervated by luxury, and " hanging by a thread—Can any one look without pain " to the issue?"

Here, Sir, I shall give a direct answer to your question, by telling you that, from the obvious spirit and design of your pamphlet, I cannot entertain a doubt of your being one who, " without pain," could look to that issue which you allude to. *God* grant that a real repentance may speedily take place; and may every unnatural thought of your heart be forgiven you. You say that the colonies are inspired by the noble passion of freedom, and animated by piety. But allow me, Sir, to ask, whether the present rebellion against their lawful sove-

reign,

reign, and their repeated acts of tyranny over their fellow-subjects, can possibly be admitted as proofs of either the one or the other? You very justly charge our state with inflation and irreligion. But, instead of endeavouring to check them, by a proper exertion of your clerical powers, you have inculcated such notions of liberty, as would open the flood-gates to every species of immorality, and deluge the whole earth with anarchy and wickedness. I shall not attempt to contradict what you have said of our enervated state, lest you should plead the part you have acted with impunity, as a proof of your assertion: I hope I shall never feel the smallest inclination to enter the lists against sterling truth. I grant that we have been long encumbered with debt. Thanks to our brethren in America for its late considerable increase. But pray, Sir, what idea are we to form of that greatness which you are pleased to suspend by a *thread*? Happily, however, for this kingdom, you have not been able to cut that very tenuous substance; nor to dissolve our social bands. May such disappointment continue to attend all the enemies of Britain until the curtain of time shall drop.

What you say, in page 54, concerning the Americans, being called our subjects, is a ridiculous effort to misrepresent the friends of government, and impose upon your readers. You know there is not a man of sound judgment, in this kingdom, who thinks himself a king over any of the American colonies: and that, whenever the colonists are called our subjects, the meaning is obvious enough to all who are willing to understand it; namely, that they are subjects to our crown or government.

In page 55, speaking of the colonists, aiming at independence, you say, " If they can subsist without you,

" is it to be wondered at? Did there ever exist a *community*, or even an *individual*, that would not do the same?"

To this, Sir, I answer in the negative. I will venture to say, there never was either a *community* or an *individual* that could do the same, until all natural, moral, and civil obligations had lost their due influence. It is generally held, that faith and confidence ought mutually to subsist, even among thieves and robbers. But you are for every man and every community's breaking through all their engagements and obligations whenever it suits their own convenience. Such doctrine may be deemed favourable to the present American rebellion. But mark, Sir, what I say, I am sure you never learned it in the school of *Christ*.

What you say in page 56, concerning the burning of their towns and ravaging their territories, has been the line of their conduct, not of ours. Our troops have always been sedulous in preserving their towns, as well as their other property; and several of the American incendiaries have been thrown into those very flames which themselves had kindled. *God* grant that their surviving brethren may take warning by their dreadful exit; and may sovereign grace change their hearts, and preserve them from dwelling with everlasting burnings.

I am, Reverend Sir, yours, &c.

## LETTER

## L E T T E R XIII.

Reverend Sir,

IN my last letter I took notice of some of your observations respecting the probability of our succeeding in the war with America; and I pointed out such glaring absurdities, as are seldom to be met with in any author. I shall now take the liberty of following you to the close of that section, by making a few remarks on the two last paragraphs.

In the first you say, "turn your eyes to India: " there more has been done than is now attempted in America: There, *Englishmen* actuated by the love of plunder and the spirit of conquest, have depopulated whole kingdoms, and ruined millions of innocent people by the most infamous oppression and rapacity.—The justice of the nation has slept over these enormities. Will the justice of Heaven sleep?—" Are we not now execrated on both sides of the globe?"

Pray, Sir, what kingdoms are those in India which you say *Englishmen*, actuated by the love of plunder and the spirit of conquest, have wholly depopulated? I have some knowledge of India, but am an utter stranger to your unpeopled kingdoms. I should be sorry to plead for the faults of any man: nothing can be farther from my intention. I am as far from thinking that the great revolutions in India were effected without bloodshed, as that individuals have not been guilty of some acts of oppression and rapacity: But I flatly deny that whole kingdoms were depopulated. Between perfect innocence, and such dreadful devastation, there may be ten thousand different degrees of guilt. In

my opinion, you ought to have been the last man in the kingdom to complain of the sleeping of its justice, for, should it awake, it may suddenly seize on yourself. The powerful motive of self-interest, might induce some of the East India Company's servants to oppress strangers; but, in order to favour the base and unnatural designs of our rebellious colonies, you have strained every nerve, in repeated attempts, to ruin your own country. "Will the justice of heaven sleep" over such enormity of guilt?

You ask, "Are we not execrated on both sides of the globe?" To which I answer, we are not. Being at Canton in China, in the year 1775, I had frequent opportunities of conversing with several of the British inhabitants of Bengal, who were commanders of ships lately come from, and belonging to, that place. From these gentlemen I had the pleasure to learn, that the natives of Bengal thought themselves extremely happy in enjoying the benefit of our laws; and that monied men were glad to reside where they found themselves on a level with the Europeans, respecting the security of their persons and their property. You appear to be so exceedingly desirous of execrating your own countrymen, that I shall not be surprised to find your indignation rise against those Indians who have dared to differ from you, by entertaining a more favourable opinion of us.

In the last paragraph you say, the colonies "were running fast into our vices. But this quarrel gives them a salutary check: and it may be permitted on purpose to favour them, and in them the rest of mankind; by making way for establishing in an extensive country possessed of every advantage, a plan of government, and a growing power that shall asto-

" nish

“ astonish the world, and under which every subject of  
 “ human enquiry shall be open to free discussion, and  
 “ the friends of liberty, in every quarter of the globe,  
 “ find a safe retreat from civil and spiritual tyranny.—  
 “ I hope, therefore, our brethren in America will for-  
 “ give their enemies. It is certain that *they know not*  
 “ *what they are doing.*”

Although it must be granted, that we have sent them a great number of felons from this country, yet I am apt to believe that the vices which you say they were running fast into, were properly their own, not ours. But this quarrel, you say, gives them a salutary check. I hope it will. I am sure we mean to check them, and effectually too. Whether the establishing of *your* plan of government and growing power, which is to astonish the world, will be the result, I shall not presume to determine: but few, I think, will suspect me of error when I say, you sincerely wish it to be so. For my own part, I certainly wish them to submit at discretion: and I leave the plan of their future government to be settled by wiser heads than either you or I can boast.

With respect to the freedom of discussion, in the several subjects of human enquiry, the plenitude of our enjoyment raises us far above all competition: nor can the friends of liberty, from whatever quarter they come, find so safe a retreat from civil and spiritual tyranny, as in this thrice happy island. If you are capable of denying a fact so well known and universally allowed, I call on you to search the whole globe, from the frozen regions of the North, to the most southern tracts yet explored, and then say, what people lives half so free, or half so happy? Should hopes of success incite you to engage in a minute examination, I will venture to foretel, that folly will mark your proceedings

in every quarter, and disappointment attend you throughout your ample round: that a clear superiority of our happiness, over that of the surrounding world, will be the sure result of your ill-designed enquiry; and a contempt, worthy of Britons, the reward of our labour.

I join with you in hoping that "our brethren in "America will forgive their enemies," for so it is expressly commanded by our *divine* master. But who are their enemies? Not the British government surely; for they, as their real friends, have always interposed between them and every threatening danger. You, Sir, and your adherents, appear to have been their worst enemies, by strongly exciting them to rebellion and bloodshed. May you obtain forgiveness of that infinitely just and merciful Being who hath said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay."

You say, it is *certain* that the enemies of our American brethren know not what they are doing. But on what evidence, Sir, do you ground your certainty in this matter? Why, I Richard Price, Doctor of Divinity, and Fellow of the Royal Society, *say* it is *certain*. This, Sir, is no proof. To believe it, *because* you have asserted it, is to believe it merely on the testimony of the author: but, previous to my believing it as a proposition, I must understand it; and my assent must be founded on evidence.

Would you have us believe that those whom you call the enemies of our American brethren are mere machines, wholly under the influence and direction of external agents; and as unconscious of, as passive to, their several impulses? Man consists of a reasonable soul joined to a fitly organized body. And although we cannot conceive how two things so essentially different as mind and matter can act on each other, seeing

ing the intangibility of spirit renders all contact impossible; yet experience affords us abundant proof of their agency. We know that the soul no sooner wills to move those parts of the body subjected to voluntary motion, but they immediately obey the volition: and, on the other hand, whenever any impressions are made on the body, whether they arise from internal or external causes, the soul becomes instantly conscious of them. Are we, Sir, to believe, that this wise and wonderful appointment of our almighty *Parent*, has not extended to those whom you are pleased to style enemies to our brethren in America? Or that their political notions have brought on such a dreadful delirium, that the whole system of their nature have thereby been thrown into wild confusion? Perhaps you will say you did not mean that their actions were involuntary, or that they were unconscious of their existence: but only that you was certain they knew not their natural tendency, or were totally ignorant of those events in which they would ultimately terminate. If this, Sir, is really the case, which, by the bye, is the most favourable construction that can possibly be put on your words, the difficulty still recurs; namely, how, or by what infallible mode of investigation, did you become so certain of their ignorance? All the knowledge that an embodied spirit can naturally receive of external objects, must be communicated by the organs of that particular body to which it is intimately united. Do you possess the spirit of prophecy? Or are you endowed with supernatural powers? Some may affect to believe whatever they ardently wish to be true; and others may applaud that which they do not understand, because the author is deemed a learned disclaimer. But impartial and discerning reason will strip you of

every delusory embellishment, break through the flimsy cobweb of your pretended patriotism, and lay bare your dark designs.

I am, Reverend Sir, yours, &c.

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L E T T E R XIV.

Reverend Sir,

I Presume you have seen the letters which, at different times, I addressed to you in this paper, containing remarks upon your Observations on Civil Liberty, &c. and I have no doubt of your being perfectly acquainted with their contents.

Having been out of the kingdom when your pamphlet was published, I had not an opportunity of reading it until about the month of August last: nor had I the least intention of taking any public notice of its contents, until, towards the close of the year, I heard that the author was a dissenting minister.

My business is to go down to the sea in ships, there to see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. Yours is to proclaim the wonders of redeeming love, and point out, to a guilty world, the way to bliss. To join Britain to distant worlds, by conveying their several commodities through warring elements on the pathless deep, has long been my employment. To join earth to heaven, by conducting the lords of this lower creation through warring passions and seducing spirits, is the business and honour of your still more important office.

An investigation of politics does not, in my opinion, lie within the limits of your proper sphere. And publickly

publickly to determine in a matter of disputed legality between Great Britain and her colonies, to the manifest prejudice of the former, is surely inconsistent with your obligations as a Briton and as a minister. When our *Saviour* was solicited to settle a dispute between two brothers, his answer was, *Who made me a judge or a divider over you?* Hath our *Lord* given that power and privilege to his ambassadors, which he disclaimed in himself? Or can you, as a minister of the gospel, look upon his example as unworthy of your imitation? It will be in vain, Sir, for you to claim respect from a discerning laity, whilst your actions are incompatible with the dignity and importance of your ministerial office. I can truly say, that I should not have thought of entering into the present controversy, but for your very eccentric and pernicious conduct. And my reason for having addressed you in my own name, has not been merely because you had declared your resolution to disregard every anonymous answerer, but chiefly because I am of opinion that, when any individual is publickly censured, the accuser ought always to fix his own identity with the same precision as that of his antagonist: every man who publickly arraigns the conduct of another, ought, in every step, to proceed at his own peril, otherwise, our boasted liberty of the press, must, instead of a blessing, frequently prove an intolerable curse.

The similarity between religious and civil liberty, which you have so much insisted on, I cannot assent to. Religion consists chiefly in that of the heart; as our *Lord* says, *God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.* Every man hath a right, not only to judge for himself in all religious cases, but also to act agreeable to the dictates of his conscience, provided that he does not transgress

the laws of his country. Protestants may differ widely in their religious sentiments, and yet be all good subjects: but our political principles affect us directly in that capacity. When we become capable of judging for ourselves in religious matters, we may believe and practise very differently from that particular *set* to which we had been joined by our parents; and yet remain as good subjects as before. But we cannot profess civil principles and opinions repugnant to those of our country, and yet continue good members of the community.

Throughout the whole of your pamphlet, you seem to have aimed at the ruin of your own country: but thanks to our almighty Preserver, who hath hitherto defeated all your unnatural designs; your definition of liberty is so inconsistent with every principle of society, that no subject upon earth either can, or ought to enjoy it. In short, Sir, your liberty is real slavery; and your slavery is true liberty. If men were every where determined to act agreeable to your standard, what horror and desolation would quickly overspread the whole habitable world! Were mankind universally to adopt your sentiments of liberty, they would immediately dissolve all legal government, because it stands in direct opposition to your infernal scheme; and then! What then? Then would every man turn his destroying weapon against his fellow competitors: and liberty, property, and even life itself would be decided by the *longest sword*! Are your instruments of death irresistible! or is your arm omnipotent; that you can entertain hopes of prevailing amidst such universal anarchy and carnage?

In page 9, you say, " In general, to be free, is to be guided by one's own will; and to be guided by the will of another is the characteristic of servitude."

And

And yet, in the same page, you say, " If the persons  
 " to whom the trust of government is committed, hold  
 " their places for short terms ; if they are chosen by  
 " the unbiased voices of a majority of the state, and  
 " subject to their instructions ; liberty will be enjoyed  
 " in its highest degree."

I defy you, Sir, and all the world, were they assembled together, to reconcile these two passages. Can you with the least shadow of truth say, that those who govern are guided by their own will ; if, at the same time, they are subject to the instruction of their constituents ? Is this your method of enjoying liberty in the highest degree ? For shame, Sir, either own to an injured public that you have exceedingly erred ; or renounce every claim to consistency and truth.

Touching the motives which induced you to publish your Observations on Civil Liberty, you say, in page 55  
 " I do this with reluctance and pain, urged by strong  
 " feelings ; but at the same time checked by the consciousness that I am likely to deliver sentiments not  
 " favourable to the present measures of that government,  
 " under which I live, and to which I am a zealous and  
 " constant well-wisher."

You say that you are a zealous and constant well-wisher to our government ; but who, among all your numerous readers, can possibly believe your assertion ? Whoever adverts to your subsequent conduct, can as easily admit heat to be cold, and black to be white.

Concerning the situation of our affairs with the Americans you say, in page 19, " Shocking situation !  
 " Detested be the measures which have brought us into  
 " it ; and if we are endeavouring to enforce injustice,  
 " cursed

“ cursed will be the war.” With respect to the right of the British legislature over the colonies, as declared in an act of parliament made on purpose to define it, you say in page 20, “ Dreadful power indeed ! I defy any one to express slavery in stronger terms.” In page 27 you say, “ This is a war undertaken not only against the principles of our own constitution, but on purpose to destroy other similar constitutions in America ; and to substitute in their room a military force. It is therefore, a gross and flagrant violation of the constitution.” In page 31, you say, “ By an armed force we are now endeavouring to destroy the laws and governments of America.” And with respect to the late tea act you say, in page 37, “ Vile policy ! What a scourge is government so conducted ?”

If these passages, Sir, are really expressive of the zealous and constant well-wisher to our government, I must confess myself to be an utter stranger to the English language. Can you name any one man now in the kingdom, who has dared to treat government in the manner you have done ? And is there, without the British dominions, a place to be found, where your base temerity would not long ago have met with due chastisement ? “ The justice of the nation has slept over these enormities. Will the justice of heaven sleep ?” Remember, Sir, that the lips of truth once said, *Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.*

I am, Reverend Sir, your’s, &c.

LETTER

## LETTER XV.

Reverend Sir,

**I**N my preceding letters I have delivered my sentiments on your pamphlet entitled, “*Observations on Civil Liberty, &c.*” and as I find that Mr. Stewart, whose second letter is the only tract that I have yet read on the subject, hath refuted some material articles in your calculations, I shall, without entering on that head, once more crave your attention to a few remarks.

In pages 19 and 41, you are pleased to call Great Britain a *free* country. But that very declaration of freedom is clearly intended to favour your main design. From page 39 to 46 inclusive, you basely endeavour to excite the most dreadful apprehensions of a general bankruptcy; and you tell us that a *panic* struck, a *suspicion* raised, *however groundless*, would dissolve the whole frame of our government, and reduce us to a state of nature. Although one might reasonably expect that an American revenue would tend to remedy our insolvent state, and prevent those shocking events which you have ventured to foretel, you endeavour to deter every British subject from aiding government in that business, by asking the following question, in page 56, “Would not (say you) “the disposal of American places, and the distribution “of an American revenue, render that influence of the “crown irresistible, which has already stabbed your “liberties?”

Thus, Sir, whether we are *rich* or *poor*, *freemen* or *slaves*, the government must be reprobated, Great Britain ruined, and America exalted above every power on earth. Nay, so very determined have you been in the execution

of

of your unnatural plan, that, left a narration of what the British legislature had done, through urgent necessity, should not answer your *diabolical* purpose, you have had recourse to the wicked imagination of your own heart, in order to draw such a conclusion from the fictitious premises, as might more effectually betray your incautious readers into *rebellion* and *bloodshed*.—After reciting, in page 26, what had lately been enacted concerning the province of Massachuset's Bay, you say, “ If all this “ is no more than what we have a right to do, may we “ not go on to abolish the house of representatives, to “ destroy all trials by juries, and to give up the province “ absolutely and totally to the will of the king?— “ May we not even establish Popery in the province “ as has been lately done in Canada, leaving the support “ of Protestantism to the king's discretion?—Can there “ be an Englishman who, were it his own case, would “ not sooner lose his heart's blood, than yield to claims “ so pregnant with evils, and destructive to every thing “ that can distinguish a *freeman* from a *slave*? ”

Here, Sir, I cannot entertain a doubt of your treacherous design. From premises hatched in your own heart you have drawn a conclusion, clearly calculated to promote anarchy and slaughter throughout the British dominions. “ Who, say you, would not sooner lose his *heart's blood*, than yield to *claims* so pregnant with evils.” The promulgation of such a sanguinary doctrine by a minister of the gospel, must grate upon the ear of every Christian, and shock humanity in every quarter. Pray, Sir, who *hath claimed* that which you have so wickedly imagined? I call upon you, Sir, to stand forth publicly, and declare who they are? Whilst I believe that it originated in your own heart, I must look upon you as an affecting proof of human depravity. May sovereign grace prevail over your moral turpitude; may your injured country freely

freely forgive all your evil machinations against it; and may the Almighty graciously accept of your contrition.

When I consider your public attempts to annihilate the British constitution, in order to favour the rebellious views of your darlings in America; when I reflect on the many *falsehoods*, the egregious *absurdities*, and the glaring *inconsistencies*, published in your *Observations on Civil Liberty, &c.* I am amazed at the boundless credulity of many of your advocates!—Where is the man, and what is his name, who dares step forth and attempt to prove that *men* without *liberty* are *beasts*? You have, indeed, ventured to assert it; but, for the honour of our species, I hope you will not find an associate among all the numerous sons of Adam. Is it possible for us to believe that all who are prevented from following the impulse of their own wills, are *beasts*? Were all the prophets, apostles, and godly men who have suffered the loss of liberty, and even of life itself, in the cause of Godliness and Christianity, *beasts*? And what epithet shall we apply to the Saviour of the world, who was *bound, buffeted, spit on, scourged, and crucified*? The answer, correspondent to your assertion, must fill every Christian soul with the most painful ideas—O sin! thou great despoiler of the human soul, how dost thou continue to triumph over the fallen race of Adam! Ever since thy first entrance into Eden, thou hast pursued our species through every lane of life; and, under thy baleful influence, *the gold has become dim, and the most fine gold changed*.

Pray, Sir, allow me to ask, what could induce you to treat your own country in the manner you have done? Supposing that your political principles had been universally adopted, and your predictions every where believed, would not you have been involved in the general ruin? Or had you determined to flee to America as soon as the begin-

beginnings of desolation had evinced, that your *baneful talents* would no longer be necessary here? Did you verily believe, that Presbyterianism would be established in the *boundless* continent of America, as you are pleased to style it, and that you would there become more powerful and independent? In page 29, you say, "There is a "love of power inherent in human nature;" and as you partake of human nature, I may fairly conclude, that a love of power is inherent in you.

Every promulgation is an appeal to the public, and to them the author is undoubtedly accountable, not only for the truth, but the tendency also, of every tittle which is advanced. You have ventured to address the public in such a manner as, perhaps, no man ever did, or durst do before you: and this is the *fifteenth* letter which I have addressed to you by way of refutation. How far I have succeeded, the public will judge; and how far your silence, on that subject, be justifiable, I freely submit to be decided at the same tribunal. As I wish to be always as forward in rendering justice to others as in claiming it to myself, I now call on you to take a review of all that I have advanced against you: If I have misquoted your words in any one instance, point it out; if I have disjoined any part, from that with which it stood necessarily or properly connected, refer to the passage; if I have strained any of your words, or put a single sentence to the torture, in order to make it speak what you never intended, shew the injustice; if I have been too severe in my remarks, or made use of any improper expression, in the discussion of any part of the subject, exhibit your complaint; or, if I have attempted to injure you by imposing upon the public, say how, and in what; I declare myself ready to render ample and immediate satisfaction.

On

On the other hand, so far as it appears, that you have injured the public in general, and the government in particular, you ought freely to own your fault; it is the only reparation now in your power, and common justice requires that it should be immediately rendered. As a Briton, and as a dissenter, I feel the injury; and, in each capacity, demand reparation. Britain now bleeds under the fatal effects of your doctrine; and the dissenting name is stamped with *disaffection* and *disloyalty*. I presume, Sir, that you cannot be ignorant of the many liberties which some have publicly taken with dissenters in consequence of your conduct; and although their general reproaches are *illiberal*, *uncandid* and *false*; yet many of the well-meaning, but too credulous multitude, will believe them, merely because they are positively asserted.

There are many dissenters who are warmly attached to the British government, and I have the pleasure of knowing some ministers, whose pulpits frequently resound with expressions of *loyalty* to their king, and *love* to their country. These gentlemen, by inculcating the *fear* of God, the *honour* of their king, and the *love* of their country, become shining ornaments to the Christian name, and highly worthy of triple honour. When weighed against them in the balance of impartial reason, your mounting scale will strike the beam, and all your boasted merit vanish, like thick darkness before the *re-*fulgent beams of the meridian sun.

That we have an equal right to differ from each other in opinion, as in features and complexion, I hope none will offer to deny; the one being as properly the features of the soul, as the others are those of the body, every man must be considered as totally independent of all his fellow-mortals. But as our words and actions may

frequently affect others, who are equally entitled to freedom, the community hath wisely set bounds, beyond which, no individual can pass without rendering himself obnoxious to punishment. Be assured, Sir, that throughout the whole of this enquiry, I have acted from principle, not from *prejudice*; and the joint welfare of Great Britain and her colonies, not the self-interested views of any party, has been my invariable aim. So far as you are convinced that I have refuted your pamphlet, justice to an injured public requires your acknowledgement. And, on the other hand, where you apprehend that I have erred, a regard for truth renders a refutation on your part highly necessary. You will, in the last case, afford me an opportunity of evincing my readiness to do the public the justice and myself the honour, of not only acknowledging my errors, but also of thanking the hand which, with openness and candour, shall point out my mistakes: mistaken I often am, and may be; but, with respect to a design of hurting my king, my country, or my neighbour, I hope my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

How very different, Sir, hath the line of your conduct been! Not a passage to be met with in favour of your own country, unless where, Judas like, you mean to betray it with a kiss. O thou sedulous troubler of the British dominions! However agreeable thy doctrine may be with the principles and practice of our modern patriots, it will be found totally incompatible with true liberty, subversive of all public society, and destructive to the human race.

Human actions are, in general, like a party-coloured garment; and most of our public *acts* have several inconveniences attending them. This, Sir, furnishes you, and every enemy to government, with plausible matter

for

for declamation. The inquiry, with every true friend to his country, will not be, whether the laws, calculated for the public good, are productive of no evil or inconveniency to individuals? but whether they produce *much good*, attended only with a *little evil*, or a *great deal of evil*, accompanied with only a *small degree of good*? If the former is found to be the case, it is as much as can be expected; and the inquirer ought chearfully to acquiesce, although some of the unavoidable inconveniencies should materially affect himself.

As a *Briton* and a *Dissenter* I call on you, Sir, to stand forth, and either own wherein you are wrong, or defend what you have advanced, by shewing that the arguments against you are false or inconclusive. If a multiplicity of your clerical duties really prevent you, I declare my willingness to accept of a defence from any of your brethren, who may find themselves more at leisure, provided that they publish their names and places of abode. Or I am ready, personally and alone, to meet you, and all your principal friends assembled, on the subject. Think not, Sir, that this offer arises from a full opinion of my own polemic abilities, but from a high persuasion that *truth* and *justice* are on my side, and that they are easily defended. If I am wrong, I sincerely wish to *think, speak and act* more justly. You will please to observe, Sir, that I am no ministerial hireling; nor am I otherwise connected with any servant of the crown than, as a member of the community, I think it my indispensable duty to aid and assist that government, to which, under *God*, I owe the enjoyment of life, with all that is valuable to me on earth.

Some anonymous writers have bestowed very high encomiums on the *good* and *pious* disposition of your mind; which, for your own sake and that of your flock, I wish

so be just: but surely your political conduct, to say the least, can never be admitted as proof. I am sorry to hear that your late publication breathes the same spirit as that which I have read and considered. It is recorded of Ahab king of Israel, that *he sold himself to work wickedness*. I do not say that this has been the case with you. Perhaps an intemperate zeal for liberty, a predilection for our American brethren, and a fixed antipathy to government, has hurried you into a train of impositions upon yourself, as well as on the public. However that may be, I think I am warranted in saying, that you ought carefully to examine your political conduct as a man, as a Briton, as a Christian, and as a minister; and if, in all or any of these capacities, conviction should stare you in the face; I would advise you to come forth, as every member of the community ought to do, and fairly own its irresistible force.

How insignificant will the plaudits of a giddy multitude, the approbation of a self-interested party, the countenance of the dignified, and the munificence of the opulent appear, when compared with those solid and permanent pleasures which result from the testimony of a good conscience. When you are found guilty in every social capacity, and your conduct stands condemned by every law, human and divine, what will it avail you to plead the suffrages of your numerous brethren in rebellion, the freedom of the metropolis, or the shining bauble which encloses it? Although your publication has not produced those dire effects for which it was calculated, think not that your offence is thereby extenuated. Though, through the peculiar lenity of our government, no judicial notice has been taken of your baneful proceedings, do not imagine that they are therefore blotted out from the records of heaven; and though

though you have deceived many of your fellow-mortals, be not elated; the period may not be far distant, when they shall see both you and the important subject in a very different light. May you, as a Briton and as a Christian teacher, seriously review your political conduct; may you speedily become reconciled to the government of your own country; and, finally, may you obtain forgiveness of that Almighty Being, before whose omniscient eye, *Hell is naked, and destruction bath no covering.*

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

F 3 **LETTERS**

# LETTERS

IN ANSWER TO

## Dr. PRICE'S ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS on CIVIL LIBERTY, &c.

### LETTER I.

Reverend Sir,

I PRESUME you well remember my having addressed you in a former series of letters, in the Public Ledger, from the 8th of January last, to April the 29th. In those letters I candidly stated my objections to several things contained in your pamphlet, entitled "Observations on Civil Liberty, &c." and I called on you either to own the justness of my remarks, or to shew wherein they were impertinent, inconclusive, or false. But, averse to the first and unable to effect the last, you have hitherto remained silent; although justice to yourself, to your injured country, and to the cause of truth, required you to speak.

Soon after the publication of my last letters, I read your pamphlet, entitled, "Additional Observations on the Nature and Value of Civil Liberty," and although you there declare your having taken your leave of politics, I thought that the fair, and, in some respects, uncommon offers I had made, would have induced you, or some of your brethren, either to defend what you had advanced, or to have apologized for your seditious conduct. But the length of time which hath now elapsed, together with the declining state of your cause, leaving little

room

room to hope that you have any intention of entering on that subject now, I shall beg leave to make some strictures on your last publication.—As a Briton, and as a Protestant dissenter, I again declare myself your antagonist, and require you to stand forth in the defence of yourself, and of that cause which you have so warmly and unwarrantably espoused.

In dedicating your Additional Observations to the lord-mayor, aldermen, and commons of the city of London, I am at a loss to say, whether the honour you have conferred, or that which you have derived, is the *least*. There was a time when the British metropolis shone with inimitable lustre; and, though a malignant party spirit hath for some years past eclipsed her, I hope the time now approaches, when her sphere will again brighten with her returning radiance.

In page 7 of your Introduction you say, “ In the first part of the Observations on Civil Liberty, published last winter, I gave a brief account of the nature of liberty in general, and of civil liberty in particular: that account appears to me, after carefully reconsidering it, to be just; nor do I think it in my power to impeach it.”

You say, Sir, that you have carefully reconsidered your Observations on Civil Liberty, and the result is, that they appear to you to be just. Pray, Sir, allow me to ask, if this be acting up to that rank which you hold in the learned world? The way to become dogmatical, is to examine one side of the question only; but the way for an inquirer to do himself justice is, to examine both sides as carefully and impartially as possible. It certainly was incumbent on you to have stated the arguments of your opponents fairly, and then to have shewn, that they were either false or inconclusive with respect to that refutation for which they were advanced.

You say, that your account appears *to you* to be just; but as I am no wise disposed to receive this on your bare *ipse dixit*, I ask how your former Observations on Civil Liberty can possibly appear to be just? You have said that, "as far as, in any instance, the "operation of any cause comes in to restrain the power "of self-government, so far slavery is introduced:" but you have not so much as attempted to prove, that this definition is just. You have told us, indeed, that you *think* a preciser idea of liberty and slavery cannot be formed. But is your extravagant *thought* to be admitted as the *criterion* of *liberty* and *slavery*! Surely you cannot believe, that things directly contrary to common sense ought to be credited, merely on your testimony: nor can you be ignorant of that injustice, which glaringly appears throughout your former account of liberty. Let us suppose that I saw you about to commit a murder which I could easily prevent; how ought I to conduct myself on the occasion? Could any man in his right senses think, that the fear of reducing you to a state of slavery, ought to deter me from interposing my power in behalf of the devoted victim? For my own part, I should think it my indispensable duty, not only to deprive you of your self-government in that particular, but also to use my utmost endeavours to bring you to justice.

I can readily admit, that it is not in *your power* to improve your account of liberty; but surely, Sir, it is in *your power* to discard it altogether, and instead thereof, to publish such a definition of liberty as may be deemed consistent with the true interest of public society.

In page 8 you say, "In the first section of this second "part, it will, I think, appear, that I went on as good "grounds as the nature of the case admitted, when I "stated the gold coin of the kingdom at about twelve  
" millions

“ millions and a half. It appears now, indeed, to be  
 “ some millions more. But this is a discovery made by  
 “ the call of last summer, which I find hath brought in  
 “ near double the sum that the best judges expected.  
 “ Nothing, however, very encouraging can be inferred  
 “ from hence. It only shews that a great deal of gold  
 “ has been hoarded ; and will, probably, be again  
 “ hoarded. This is the natural consequence of public  
 “ diffidence ; and it is a circumstance which may here-  
 “ after greatly increase distress.”

In answer to this, Sir, I would observe, that the question with me is not whether you went on as good grounds as the nature of the case admitted? But how you durst venture to declare so positively in a matter of such moment, without having sufficient evidence for so doing? As your intention in stating the quantity of our species at about twelve millions and a half, was to distress the kingdom by raising a diffidence in the paper-holders; it must afford great pleasure to all who wish well to Britain, to find that your account was false. Your having acknowledged that you was wrong, when obliged thereto, can never be admitted as any proof of your innocence: nor can the particular manner by which the falsehood was discovered, have the least tendency to extenuate your offence.

As to your *best judges*, I presume they are nearly allied to those whom, in your former publications, you was pleased to style, “ some of the *wisest men* in Amer-  
 “ ica,” for you own that the sum brought in last summer, was double to what they expected. From hence, I think, the following *very encouraging* inference may fairly be drawn; namely, that no credit is due to the confident, unsupported assertions of one so shame-  
 fully regardless of truth. If hoarding of the species be,  
 as you say, a natural consequence of public diffidence,  
 and

and tends to increase national distress, what a load of guilt must press on your head! In order to fix this charge with greater precision, I beg leave to refer to the following passage in the page before quoted; you there say, that, " before the Revolution, according " to Doctor Davenant, near half the coin was hoard- " ed; and the same undoubtedly will be done again, " whenever the nation comes to be thoroughly alarmed."

Pray, Sir, have not *you* been remarkably assiduous in your endeavours to alarm us thoroughly? And have you not exerted every baneful talent to the uttermost, in order to increase our distress?—But, thanks be to *God*, the very circumstance which discovered the falsehood of your calculation respecting the quantity of our coin, affords an incontestible proof that your base designs have proved abortive.—May such disappointment attend you in all your wicked machinations! May impartial justice and right judgment universally prevail; and may Great Britain continue to be the favourite of heaven throughout this, and every succeeding generation.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble servant,

JOHN STEVENSON.

Nov. 2,  
1777.

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L E T T E R II.

Reverend Sir,

IN my last letter I made remarks on some passage in the introduction to your pamphlet, entitled, " Additional Observations on Civil Liberty;" and in this I shall present you with what I have further to offer on that part of your publication.

In

In page 10 you say, " The representation I have given in this section and elsewhere, of the state of this kingdom, is, without doubt, gloomy. But it is not the effect, as some have intimated, of either a natural disposition to gloominess, or of sinister views. Few who know me will entertain such a suspicion. Valuing *most*, what politicians and statesmen value *least*, I feel myself perfectly easy with respect to my interest as a citizen of this world. Nor is there any change of situation can make me happier, except a return to privacy and obscurity."

You own that the representation which you have given of our state is gloomy, but deny that it proceeds from either a disposition to gloominess, or from sinister views. Some men conceal their real motives and views so artfully, that it is no easy matter to develope them. Solomon says, " *the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?*" Clearly intimating the great difficulty, if not the impossibility, of fully knowing it. Our Saviour, speaking of the human race, says, " *By their fruits ye shall know them.*" However, in judging by this rule, you may be acquitted of the charge of gloominess in your disposition; I think I may venture to pronounce you clearly guilty in the matter of sinister views. Whether you value *most*, what politicians and statesmen value *least*, I shall leave to be settled between you and them. But if you are perfectly easy, with respect to your interest as a citizen of this world, why such strenuous and repeated efforts to turn it upside down? If you are really happy as a citizen of this world, surely you will not dare to justify your political conduct, as being a candidate for that which is to come. Here, Sir, you have stripped yourself of every shadow of excuse, and you

stand

with out much hazard of being seen or else you

and obnoxious to the just abhorrence of all good citizens.

You own that your happiness is already so complete, that no situation can add to it but a return to privacy and obscurity. But why, Sir, did you emerge from your privacy and obscurity in such a manner, as to render a return so conducive to your future happiness? Our Saviour, indeed, says, *there shall be more joy in Heaven over one sinner who repenteth, than ninety and nine just persons who needeth no repentance.* But do you truly repent? If you do, there is hope of your success. Let me advise you, Sir, to think seriously of this matter, and, agreeable to your convictions, bewail your past offences, reform your conduct, and do justice to your injured country. But to proceed:

In the page before quoted, you say, " the measures " which I condemn as the worst that ever disgraced and " hazarded a great kingdom, others, whose integrity " I cannot question, approve; and that very situation " of our affairs which I think alarming, others think " prosperous. Time will determine which of these " opinions is right. But supposing the latter to be so, " no harm can arise from any representations which have " a tendency to put us on our guard."

I readily agree with you, Sir, that " no harm can " arise from any representations which have a tendency " to put us on our guard." But is it possible for any man, upon due examination, to believe, that yours are of this friendly kind? Your representations, Sir, instead of putting us upon our guard, have a direct tendency to deprive us of the very power of guarding ourselves. When you think seriously of the time when, and the manner in which, you have ventured to represent the situation of this much injured kingdom; surely you must wish to hide your guilty head from the view

of every fellow-subject. That which, at one time, might merit a gold chain; may, at another, render the author highly deserving of a halter. Which of these two ought to be the reward of your political labour, I leave to the decision of *God* and your country. May you repent speedily; may you amend thoroughly; and may you have the happiness to experience, that mercy triumphs over judgment.

In page 16th you say, "I have only to add, that "I am truly ashamed of having, in this introduction, "had occasion to say so much about myself. But, I "hope, candid allowances will be made for it, when "it is considered how much, for some time, has been "said and writ about me. I now leave an open field "to all who shall please to take any farther notice of "me; wishing them the same satisfaction that I have "felt, in *meaning* to promote peace and justice. And "looking higher than this world of strife and tumult— "I withdraw from politics."

I am far from wondering at your being ashamed of having said so much about yourself. But I am much amazed at your hoping that candid allowances will be made on account of what has been said and written about you. In order to have become justly entitled to any such allowances, you ought to have stated the arguments of your opponents fairly, and refuted them properly. But this method, for very obvious reasons, you have thought proper to avoid.

You say, "That you leave an open field to all "who shall please to take any farther notice of you:" and I declare myself to be one of those who willingly enter upon that field, in order to root up those baneful plants, whose winged seeds contaminate the very air we breathe, and threaten destruction to all around.

God forbid that I should have no other satisfaction than you have " felt in meaning (as you audaciously " say) to promote peace and justice." What would you think of the man who could believe such a palpable falsehood? To hear you speak of feeling satisfaction in meaning to promote peace and justice, after the most obvious and unparalleled efforts to involve the whole world in ruin and blood, must fill every impartial breast with inexpressible indignation. Solomon tells us that, *as a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death; so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, am not I in sport?* But, instead of apologizing, you claim a merit in doing of that, which none but an infernal spirit can think of, without horror.

You conclude your introduction with telling us that, " Looking higher than this world of strife and " tumult, you withdraw from politics." What! Sir, can you think of soaring to heaven with all your political guilt pressing you in a very different direction? O matchless infatuation! you have sent your poisonous doctrine into the world; and, conscious of your inability to defend it, you basely trust to a spirit of licentiousness, party-prejudice, and an aversion to legal government, for its success. May reclaiming grace reach your heart. May your future conduct evince your sincere repentance. And may infinite mercy favour your heavenward views.

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R III.

Reverend Sir,

MY last concluded with some remarks on the motives which you said had induced you to withdraw from politics, as set forth in the close of the introduction to your "Additional Observations on "Civil Liberty, &c." And, as I find there are many exceptionable passages in that publication, I shall begin with your first section.

The distinction which you make, in page 3, "Between the liberty of a state, and its not suffering oppression, between a free government, and a government under which freedom is enjoyed," is, in my opinion, a very proper one. But I cannot admit the conclusion which you have drawn from the premises,

"Under the most despotic government," you say, "liberty may happen to be enjoyed. But being derived from a will over which the state has no control, and not from its own will; or from an accidental mildness in the *administration*, and not from a *constitution* of government; it is nothing but an indulgence of a precarious nature, and of little importance."

I freely admit that liberty, dependent on administration, may be precarious with respect to its duration; but I flatly deny that it ought to be deemed of little importance, whilst the actual enjoyment of liberty is held valuable. Many are of opinion that absolute government is the best, when the sovereign is a good man, because the plenitude of his power enables him to punish every wicked minister, and to diffuse his goodness

goodness through the remotest corners of his dominion. But, according to your conclusion, it is of little importance to the subjects of an absolute monarch, whether he be a good sovereign, or a bad one. Who, that reads the Bible, does not make a wide difference between the reign of Solomon, when *Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree*; and that of Manasseh, who *filled Jerusalem, from one end to the other, with innocent blood?* For my part I prefer the substance to the shadow; and I wish to have the actual enjoyment of liberty, rather than to have my head filled with that which is merely ideal.

Here, Sir, it ought to be particularly observed, that although you make the value of civil liberty to consist in its arising from the will of the state, in its proceeding from a constitution of government, yet, in the very same paragraph, you say, “ Civil liberty (it “ should be remembered) must be enjoyed as a right “ derived from the author of nature only, or it cannot “ be the blessing which merits that name. If there is “ any human power which is considered as giving it, “ on which it depends, and which can invade or recal “ it at pleasure, it changes its nature, and becomes a “ species of slavery.”

Is it possible, Sir, to reconcile such glaring contradictions? First to say that civil liberty, unless it be derived from a constitution of government, is of little importance; and immediately after to insist that, if it is not enjoyed as a right derived from the Author of nature only, and totally independent of every *human power*, “ it changes its nature, and becomes a species “ of slavery,” must fill every intelligent reader with wonder and indignation! Whatever your hopes might

be,

be, with respect to those who appear always ready to close with every thing which comes from the pen of a loud declaimer against the government; surely you could never imagine that any unprejudiced person would actually believe things so amazingly inconsistent. I can no more believe the state to be the *Author of Nature*, than I can deny that the constitution of government proceeds from *human power*.

Were it not that some base designing men think it their interest to fish in troubled water, I am persuaded that Britons would be unanimous in dooming you to a perpetual banishment from this peculiarly happy country. None who duly consider your political conduct can think you justly entitled to complain, though a love of peace and unanimity should induce our government to send you to America, there to enjoy your unbounded freedom among those *virtuous* members of society, your *invincible* champions for liberty.

To assert that liberty, when it proceeds from an accidental mildness in the administration, or from any human power which is considered as giving it, changes its nature, and becomes a species of *slavery*, is surely unworthy, even of yourself! You might as well have said that the happiness of heaven would be changed into *torment*, if we obtained our admission by the free grace of the Almighty.—Cease, Sir, to presume so exceedingly on the credulity of your readers; although you may know that mankind, in every probable case, have a strong inclination to believe that which they wish to be true, you could never imagine that two things as repugnant to each other as light is to darkness could be credited. To endeavour to confound your subject, where you ought to have confessed your fault, is highly unworthy of your character as a christian

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teacher; and your repeated attempts to pass known falsehood and glaring inconsistency for truth, must mark you as a fit object for universal contempt.

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

#### L E T T E R . IV.

Reverend Sir,

MY last contained some remarks on your supplemental Observations on Civil Liberty; and, under a fixed resolution of exposing your very unjustifiable conduct, I beg leave to call for your farther attention on that subject.

In pages 10 and 11, you say, "It has been said, "that the liberty for which I have pleaded, is a right "or power in every one to act as he likes, without "any restraint. However unfairly this representation "has been given of my account of liberty, I am ready "to adopt it, provided it is understood with a few li- "mitations."

Here you complain that it is unfair in your opponents to say, "that the liberty for which you have pleaded, is a right or power in every one to act as "he likes, without any restraint." But surely, Sir, you must know, that your charge of unfairness is founded in a shameful departure from truth. In page 6, of your Observations on Civil Liberty, you have said, "As far as in any instance, the operation of any cause "comes in to restrain the power of self government, so "far slavery is introduced: nor do I think," say you, "that a preciser idea, than this of liberty and slavery, "can be formed."

Again,

Again, in page 9, you say, "In general to be free, is to be guided by one's own will; and to be guided by the will of another is the characteristic of servitude." Here, Sir, is surely something more than adopting, and the terms in which you have delivered yourself are so positive, explicit, and comprehensive, that they prevent every shadow of limitation.

In page 11 of your Additional Observations, before quoted, you say, "Moral liberty, in particular, cannot be better defined than by calling it a power in every one to do as he likes. My opponents in general seem to be greatly puzzled with this; and I am afraid it will signify little to attempt explaining it to them, by saying, that every man's will, if perfectly free from restraint, would carry him invariably to rectitude and virtue; and that no one who acts wickedly acts as he likes, but is conscious of a tyranny within him, overpowering his judgment, and carrying him into a conduct for which he condemns and hates himself. The things that he would, he does not; and the things that he would not, those he does. He is, therefore, a slave in the properest sense."

Who, Sir, that views the above, can forbear to condemn your unjustifiable conduct? Instead of endeavouring to convince your readers, you attempt to mislead them. And, rather than own your former definition of liberty to be false, absurd, and destructive, you appear resolved to propagate error and produce confusion. The human will, which, for the sake of your Utopian scheme of liberty, you are pleased to make the standard of virtue, is, in my opinion, only that determining faculty of the soul by which it exerts or forbears mental or bodily acts. The laws of God,

of nature, and of society, are the great standards of human actions; and by them we ought to judge of the fitness, or the unfitness of things. Had you either consulted your Bible, or adverted to experience, you must have known that the human will is quite the reverse of that which you have asserted. The Scriptures say, that the imagination of man's heart is evil, and that continually; and experience shews us, that we are naturally prone to will that which is evil. I will venture, Sir, to say, that there never was a man, since Adam, whose will either did, or could carry him invariably to rectitude and virtue.

With respect to your internal restraint, I would just observe, that although the will may be so far changed, by the grace of God, the consciousness of inability to execute, the appearance of inconveniencies, the certainty of disadvantages, the apprehension of danger, or the fear of punishment, as to pursue a conduct directly contrary to that which it otherwise intended; yet it cannot properly be said to be under any internal restraint. Considering the will as a mental power, freedom is its essential property, and without which, we cannot conceive of its existence.

To that internal tyranny, which you say overpowers the human judgment, I beg leave to object. The human will, having employed the understanding to judge of the propriety or impropriety of any particular case, must depend upon the issue of that enquiry for its subsequent choice. No sooner does the judgment determine on which side the preference lies, but the will chuses it freely: and the more obvious the difference appears, the sooner will the determination be made and the choice ensue. Taught, indeed, by long and woeful experience, we know that the ignorance and depravity of human nature often mislead

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the unwary judgment ; but we can no wise conceive how any internal tyranny can overpower it. Men, under the undue influence of their passions, will act contrary to the dictates of their conscience ; but no degree of natural or moral corruption, can tyrannically overpower the judgment : no power on earth can force us to believe that light is darkness, that a part is greater than the whole, or that the cutting off a man's head would be the surest way to preserve his life.

Leaving the remainder of the paragraph to be considered in my next letter,

I remain, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

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### L E T T E R V.

Reverend Sir,

HAVING, in my last letter, refuted your assertion concerning the natural rectitude of the human will, and shewed the impossibility of its being overpowered by any internal tyranny ; I shall now proceed to a few remarks on the remaining part of the paragraph.

In page 11, of your Additional Observations on Civil Liberty, you say, " That no one who acts wickedly, acts as he likes ; but is conscious of a tyranny within him overpowering his judgment, and carrying him into a conduct for which he condemns and hates himself. The things that he would, he does not ; and the things that he would not, those he does. He is, therefore, a slave in the properest sense."

Pray, Sir, what do you mean by saying, " That " no one who acts wickedly, acts as he likes ? " If men, in the commission of wickedness, do not like that line of conduct, preferably to all others, why do they proceed in it ? It is well known that (excepting in cases of involuntary motion) the human body does not move but according to the volition of that soul to which it is united ; and, whatever share human weakness and depravity may have in determining our wills to do that which is evil, none can justly say that they do not, in some degree, like it, at the time of their choice ? Can we suppose that any man would transgress the laws of his God, or his country, but for the present gratifications, or seeming advantages, which tempt him to run the risk of future punishment ? Do we not frequently see men walking into confinement, in order to avoid what they deem a worse evil ? And do not the unhappy men generally stand up at the gallows, in order to give the executioner an opportunity of tying them to the ignominious tree, rather than suffer themselves to be held up by force ? In either case we are sure that the body does not move but as the soul wills it.

I shall now, for argument sake, meet you on your own terms : and supposing it granted, that the will of every man, if perfectly free from internal restraint, would carry him invariably to rectitude and virtue ; I ask what tendency such concession can possibly have to prove your former definition of liberty just ? Must not the power of self-government, in any instance, be restrained by the operation of any cause, because you have thought proper to tell us, in your last publication, that no man acts wickedly, unless it be in consequence of " a tyranny within him, overpowering his judgment, and carrying him into a conduct for which

" he

" he condemns and hates himself?" This, Sir, appears to be a solecism in argument, for it tends to prove the inadmissibility of that very thing, for which you contend. To restrain the power of self-government in such a situation of things, might prevent some of those fatal effects which might arise from that which you call an internal restraint; or, in other words, it might afford a temporary deliverance from that which you call internal tyranny and slavery.

Again, supposing it granted, that no one who acts wickedly, acts as he likes; and, therefore, that every man should have full liberty of acting as he pleases: or, in other words, admitting that every man has a right to proceed in all cases, agreeable to his own will, provided that it be perfectly free from your internal restraint and tyranny; I ask how you, or any one can know, when the will of another person is perfectly free, according to your definitions? And, consequently, when they ought, and when they ought not to be restrained in their actions? As you cannot pretend to judge of the internal disposition of any man abstractedly considered, every man must be allowed the sole right of determining whether he likes, or dislikes his own acts; and, consequently, he, and he only, must enjoy the privilege of declaring when any external restraint shall be permitted to operate. Thus, Sir, your scheme of liberty, with all your refined explanation, appears truly ridiculous, and they expose you to the just contempt of every unprejudiced reader. But to return.

Surely, Sir, You must know that men do not always " condemn and hate themselves" for their acts of wickedness. I dare venture to say you have heard of several, who, so far from condemning, have valued themselves very highly on the account of their proficiency in vice. Conscience, though sensibly touched by the first com-

mission of any heinous crime, loses its tender feelings by degrees, and is rendered more and more callous by every repetition. But as your own words will probably have greater weight with you than any thing I can advance on the subject, I beg leave to present you with the following transcript from your additional Observations on Civil Liberty, &c.

In page 31 you say, " Reason in man, like the will of the community in the political world, was intended to give law to his whole conduct, and to be the supreme controuling power within him. The passions are subordinate powers, or an *executive force*, under the direction of reason, kindly given to be, as it were, wind and tide to the vessel of life in its course through this world to future honour and felicity— How different from this is the *actual* state of man? Those powers which were destined to *govern* are made to *serve*; and those powers which were destined to *serve*, are allowed to *govern*. Passion guides human life; and most men make no other use of their reason, than to justify whatever their interest or their inclination determine them to do."

When you compare the above with the general tenor of your political conduct, surely you must blush at the striking contrast. If the will of the community in the political world be, like reason in man, intended to give law to every member, and to be the supreme controuling power over every individual; your favourite scheme of self-government must be quite exploded. You complain that the *actual* state of man is very different from that which was intended; that the powers which were destined to *govern*, are made to *serve*, and those destined to *serve*, are allowed to *govern*; and yet you are exerting all the powers of your soul, in order to bring Great Britain into the same deplorable condition. Have you

not

not strove, by the most unparalleled *falsehoods* and *absurdities*, to alienate the affections of your fellow-subjects from their legal rulers? Have you not endeavoured to raise the right of self government, above the will of the state? And have you not attempted to spread rebellion, with all its horrid train, over the peaceful nations?

Your quotation from St. Paul is shamefully misapplied. Surely, Sir, you ought to have known that the Apostle is there speaking of himself after his *regeneration* or *conversion*; that he is giving an account of the struggles he had experienced between the *old* and the *new* man; and acquainting them with the effects which had been produced by the different operations of *nature* and of *grace*. Your attempting, Sir, to prove the natural rectitude of the human will, by the account which the apostle hath given us of that state into which his had been brought by the operation of *free grace*, will furnish matter of astonishment to many — But as you say, “ Passion “ guides human life, and most men make no other use “ of their reason than to justify whatever their interest “ or their inclination determine them to do.”

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

## L E T T E R VI.

Reverend Sir,

**I**N my last letter I made some remarks on the natural rectitude of the human will, as explained in page 11, of your Additional Observations on Civil Liberty; and as I find you have proceeded in the next page to treat on the institution and end of civil government, I beg leave to take notice of your observations on that subject.

In

In page 12 and 13 you say, " All have a right to the  
 " free and undisturbed possession of their good names,  
 " properties, and lives; and it is the right all have to  
 " this, that gives the right to establish civil government,  
 " which is, or ought to be, nothing but an institution  
 " (by laws and provisions made with *common consent*)  
 " for guarding this right against invasion; for giving  
 " to every one, in *temporals* and *spirituals*, the power of  
 " commanding his own conduct: or, of acting as he  
 " pleases, and going where he will, provided he does  
 " not run foul of others.—Just government, therefore,  
 " does not *infringe* liberty, but *establish* it.—It does not  
 " *take away* the rights of mankind, but *protect* and *con-*  
 " *firm* them."

Here, Sir, is such a *groupe* of *falsehood* and *inconsistency*, as cannot fail to strike every attentive reader with amazement! some, I make no doubt, will swallow implicitly whatever comes from your pen; but, for my part, I solemnly declare, that I am at a loss to say, whether the weakness of your head, or the malignity of your heart, stands most conspicuous.

You say, " all have a right to the free and undisturbed  
 " possessions of their good names, properties, and lives!" and in this, Sir, you say truly. But where is the man who hath dared to disturb and invade this right, in the open, repeated and base manner which you have done? Have you not, under the influence of mere visionary principles, reprobated thousands of men much better than yourself? And have you not strove to involve every public society in confusion and blood?

It is the natural independency of men, and their right of free-agency over all that is properly their own, which constitutes their right to form themselves into societies and establish civil government. I freely grant that civil government is, or ought to be, an institution

(by laws and provisions made with common consent) for guarding their rights against invasion. But I flatly deny that ever any one government was instituted for the purpose of "giving to every one in temporals and spirituals, " the power of commanding his own conduct; or of "acting as he pleases, and going where he will;" even though he should "not *run foul* of others." Such are, indeed, the rights of men in a state of nature; but men, in becoming members of civil society, give up their right to an independent self-government, and are, from thenceforward, bound to regulate their conduct by the will of the state. If, by running foul of others, you mean no more than one man encroaching on the rights of another, then every transgression, which is against the laws of *God* only, must stand justified among men. —O thou determined enemy to all order and justice, think on the dreadful tendency of thy doctrine, and tremble!

We cannot suppose that *just* government will ever knowingly infringe *true* liberty, because it is its business to preserve it from being infringed; nor does it take away any of the *just* rights of mankind, but protects and confirms them. But surely, Sir, you know, that the very design of its ruling power is, to prevent that self-government, for which you have so wildly pleaded. The institution of civil government must appear ridiculous to the last degree, if there are none to be governed. And if every member of a community is to be guided by his own will, civil society will differ little or nothing, from a state of nature.

You say, that civil government, "does not even "create any new subordinations of particular men to "one another, but only gives security in those several "stations, whether of authority and pre-eminence, or "of

“ of subordination and dependence, which nature has established, and which must have arisen among mankind, whether civil government had been instituted or not.”

Can you think it possible, Sir, for men to believe such palpable falsehood? Pray, Sir, what are those stations of authority and *pre-eminence*, *subordination* and *dependence*, which *nature* has established, and which, you say, must have arisen among mankind, whether civil government had been instituted or not? Do kings, and every civil ruler, derive their *pre-eminence* and authority from an establishment of *nature*, independent of the institution of civil government? And would all our ministers of justice, from the judge on the bench, down to the executioner of his sentence; all our military, from the *generalissimo* to the private sentinel; with all our naval power, from the chief admiral down to the meanest swabber, have been in their several stations of *pre-eminence* and *subordinations*, although no civil government had ever been established in Britain? Was Mr. Wilkes lord-mayor of the city of London by an establishment of *nature*? And have you derived your title of doctor of divinity from the same source?

Surely, Sir, you must know, that no man is naturally more a magistrate than another; for in page 26 you say, “Without all doubt it is the choice of the people which makes civil governors:” and in page 27 you admit, that mankind are naturally equal. In the same page you tell us, indeed, of another species of rulers. You say that, “a king, in particular, is only the first executive officer; the creature of the law; and as much accountable and subject to the law as the meanest peasant.”—What, Sir, have you forgotten that kings are legislators? And will you dare to make them the creatures

creatures of those very laws which they bring into existence.—But you proceed :

“ Were kings properly attentive to their duty, and “ as anxious as they should be about performing it, they “ could not easily avoid sinking under the weight of “ their charge.”

If a king, by the due performance of his duty, must soon render himself incapable of performing it, surely we cannot discover much wisdom in the institution of that office; whether it be allowed to proceed from an establishment in nature, or from the institution of civil government, the objection is the same.

In the page last quoted, you say, “ Mankind being “ naturally equal according to the foregoing explanation, “ civil government, *in its genuine intention*, is an insti-“ tution for maintaining that equality, by defending it “ against the encroachments of violence and tyranny. “ All the subordinations and distinctions in society, “ previous to its establishment, it leaves as it found “ them, only confirming and protecting them.”

If men are naturally equal, they cannot be naturally distinguished by pre-eminence and subordination: or if they are naturally characterized by their pre-eminence and subordination, they cannot be deemed naturally equal. Your saying that civil government was instituted for the purpose of maintaining and defending the natural equality of mankind, and at the same time intended to confirm and protect them in their natural subordinations and distinctions, is an affront to common sense. The absurdity of your assertion must appear obvious to every reader; and the governing powers in every publick society will sufficiently evince its falsehood.

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

## LETTER VII.

Reverend Sir,

I AGAIN beg your attention to some farther remarks on your Additional Observations on Civil Liberty, &c.

In pages 18 and 19 you say, " The members of free states, knowing their rights to be secure, and that they shall enjoy without molestation the fruits of every acquisition they can make, are encouraged and incited to industry. Being at liberty to push their researches as far as they can into all subjects, and to guide themselves by their own judgments in all their religious and civil concerns, while they allow others to do the same; error and superstition must lose ground. Conscious of being their own governors, bound to obey no laws, except such as they have given their consent to, and subject to no controul from the arbitrary will of any of their fellow-citizens, they possess an elevation and force of mind which must make them great and happy."

Part of this doctrine, Sir, agrees pretty exactly with that in pages 12 and 13, already considered. But that reader must be uncommonly blinded by ignorance or prejudice, who does not see that both are as opposite to truth, as black is to white. That the members of free states are encouraged and incited to industry by knowing their rights to be secure, and that they shall enjoy without molestation the fruits of every acquisition, I freely admit. But, how, Sir, can the fruits of every acquisition be enjoyed without molestation, if every individual be left to the unlimited guidance of his own judgment in all his religious and civil concerns? Surely a very small degree of serious

serious reflection here, must cover you with shame. Had you said, that the members of free states are at liberty to guide themselves by their own judgments, in all their religious and civil concerns, while they keep within the bounds prescribed by the laws, you would have said right: but that they are entitled to an unbounded self-guidance, "while they allow others to do the same," is fit only for a Dr. Price to assert, and the most abandoned of our species to approve. Whatever might be the fate of error and superstition, in such a dreadful situation of things, I am of opinion that none, even among the apostate spirits, could devise any thing more likely to desolate the earth. You surely know, that there are several species of very shocking and detestable wickedness, in which the perpetrators would willingly admit of a general participation; and can you, without trembling, think of your having in effect said, that they are thereby sanctified?

You say, that the members of free states are "conscious of being their own governors;" but, I beg leave to tell you, that there is an utter impossibility in the case.—Pray, Sir, be so obliging, for once, as to name the state, wherein every member either is, or ever was his own governor. Speaking of magistrates, in page 27, you say, "They do not govern the state; it is the state governs them." In order to strip this of its jesuitical garb, I shall just observe, that although magistrates do not govern the state, considered as a collective or a legislative body, yet they certainly govern them in their individual capacity; and the laws of the state are the rule of their government. The laws, incapable of enforcing themselves against offenders, would remain perpetually dormant in the statute book, but for that power which is wisely vested in the magistrate for carrying them into execution.

You

You likewise say, " that the members of free states are bound to obey no laws, but such as they have given their consent to." But what do you mean by the term **consent**? For my own part, I cannot understand it any otherwise, than as an actual declaration of concurrence or approbation. And, viewing it in this sense, I shall take the liberty, not only of denying your assertion, but also of charging you with having advanced that for truth, which you knew to be false. If you are capable of denying this charge, I call upon you to name the member of any state now on earth, who either does, or can stand in that predicament. If our obligation to the laws of our country can only arise from our actual consent, I should be glad to know at what precise age each individual may be deemed duly qualified to give it, or obliged to declare his objections? And whether any member can be held accountable to any of the laws of his country, anterior to that period? Pray, Sir, have *you* ever given your actual and explicit consent to any of the British laws? When the length of time, in which you have enjoyed ~~the~~ protection, is duly considered; surely you cannot say that the important question is too soon propounded. If every man has a right to his own code of laws, it will, I presume, be highly necessary that the whole should be published, with every subsequent alteration, in order that all may have an opportunity of knowing (if possible) how far each individual is bound to obey.

But to have done with the endless train of bad consequences which would flow from your strange position, I appeal to the universal custom in every public society, whether every member be not, as soon as born, entitled to all the privileges, and bound to every duty, agreeable to the laws of each particular state? Whenever any

infant

infant member becomes capable of acting, a strict conformity to the laws is absolutely required, independent of his own will or choice. You know, Sir, that no explicit or formal consent was ever thought necessary to render him legally responsible; nor can the most public and positive objections entitle him to an exemption. So far is the want of consent to the laws from hindering their obligation, that a total ignorance of them was never yet admitted as a legal plea for their non-observance. You know that every individual, within the jurisdiction of any state, is under the protection of its laws, and justly bound to their observance. Even foreigners no sooner enter within the limits of any state, but they become justly obliged to yield obedience to these laws which protect them in the peaceable enjoyment of their *properties*, their *liberties*, and their *lives*. I call upon you, Sir, with all your rebellious adherents, to remember, that privilege and duty are no less universally than inseparably connected; and whoever is entitled to the first, whether as a denizen, or as an alien, is, in either capacity, justly bound to render the last.

It is computed that, out of more than seven millions of commons in Britain, there are not three hundred thousand entitled to vote for representatives: and, of the five hundred and fifty-eight members of the House of Commons, the majority, or actual consenters to the laws, are frequently less than one hundred. From hence it appears, that the absent members and their constituents, with about seven millions of non-electors, can no more be said to give their consent to such laws, than they do to those of Persia, or of China. But will you venture to say, that they are therefore under no obligation to yield their obedience? As to the minority, you know they are so far from giving their consent, that they frequently declare their opposition in terms of the

utmost abhorrence; but will you dare to assert, that they are thereby legally exempted from obeying the will of their opponents, when such will is rendered law by the concurrence of the lords and the king? You know, Sir, that the king and the majorities in the two houses of parliament are the only actual consenters to our laws; and that a passive submission or acquiescence, arising from public and private utility, is all that can be expected on the part of the people. If I am wrong in this particular, I call upon you, and on all the advocates for the American rebellion, to point out my error. If, by your shameful departure from truth, you have intended to raise a general opposition to the British laws, and to promote the cause of the present rebellion against its government; may your heart be changed, and your crimes forgiven.

I am, Reverend Sir, yours, &c.

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### L E T T E R VIII.

Reverend Sir,

HAVING taken notice, in my last, of some of your Additional Observations on Civil Liberty, in pages 18 and 19, and shewed the glaring absurdity of several of those privileges with which you are there pleased to invest all the members of free states; I shall now proceed to a few remarks on your quotation from Montesquieu.

In page 41 you say, " It is well known that Montesquieu has paid the highest compliment to this country, by describing its constitution of government, in giving an account of a perfect government; and " by

“ by drawing the character of its inhabitants, in giving  
 “ an account of the manners and characters of a free  
 “ people.”

By this, Sir, you have in effect granted, that Montesquieu's opinion of the British constitution and people is very different from that which you entertain. You have been far from saying that the British constitution is perfect, or that we are a free people: but Montesquieu was a foreigner, and prized that happiness in Britain, which the arbitrary government of his own country had denied him. You, on the other hand, are a discontented native, who, either forgetting or perverting the blessings you enjoy, seek and contend for such freedom as would cut the reins of every unruly passion, and lay waste the earth. In order to shew how highly Montesquieu hath complimented us, I shall transcribe the following passage as you have quoted it:

“ All (he says) having, in free states, a share in  
 “ government, and the laws not being made for some  
 “ more than others, they consider themselves as *monarchs*,  
 “ and are more properly *confederates* than *subjects*.  
 “ No one citizen being subject to another, each sets a  
 “ greater value on his liberty, than on the glory of any  
 “ of his fellow-citizens. Being independent, they are  
 “ proud; for the pride of kings is founded on their in-  
 “ dependence: they are in a constant ferment, and  
 “ believe themselves in danger, even in those moments  
 “ when they are most safe: they reason, but it is in-  
 “ different whether they reason well or ill; it is sufficient  
 “ that they do reason. Hence springs that liberty which  
 “ is their security. This state, however, will lose its  
 “ liberty; it will perish, when the *legislative* power shall  
 “ become more corrupt than the *executive*.”

As I differ widely, in my opinion, from the above writer, I shall take the liberty of stating a few objections

to some of the above particulars. We know that *all* Britons have not a share in the government; nor have one in twenty any hand in making those laws by which we are all governed. There cannot be any more than one Briton considered as a monarch; and all the others, while they have the proper use of their reason, must look on themselves as his subjects. Although no citizen be subject to another, considered as individuals; yet they are far from being independent as members of the community: even our king, though not a creature of the laws, as you have thought fit to stile him in another place, cannot properly be called independent; unless we consider him in the exercise of that particular branch of his power called the prerogative of the crown.

In saying that we are in a constant ferment, and believe ourselves in danger, even in these moments when we are most safe; your favourite author has drawn a very striking picture of lunacy: and when he adds, that we reason—but it is indifferent whether we reason well or ill, it is sufficient that we do reason. I apprehend he ought rather to have said, it is sufficient that we do *rave*. To pretend to reason on any subject, without regarding whether we reason well or ill, is to debase our rational powers, and offer a gross affront to those whom we address. Yet he adds, “ Hence springs that liberty which is their greatest security.” Could I believe that British liberty springs from no better source than unreasonable reasoning (if I may be allowed the expression) I should be inclined to think that a number of parrots and magpies, properly taught, might be made to answer the purpose almost as well.

Your author tells us, that “ this state will lose its liberty, and will perish, when the legislative power shall become more corrupt than the executive.” “ This state, Sir, may lose its liberty, for any thing I can pretend

pretend to know to the contrary; but, if such be the will of Heaven, may the fatal period be far distant. Whatever Montesquieu's notions might have been respecting the duration of our liberty, I cannot conceive how he could possibly know that the British state will perish when the legislative power shall become more corrupt than the executive. This, Sir, is making the existence of our state to depend on a comparative degree of corruption. He does not say when either, or both, shall arrive at a certain degree of corruption; but when the one shall become more corrupt than the other. As this might really be the case, and yet neither of them be so far corrupted as to produce any visible effects, I beg leave to say that I cannot give the least credit to his extravagant prediction. Your opinion, however, is very different from mine, with respect to this author.

“ Such (say you) is the account which this great man gave, many years ago, of the British constitution and people. We may learn from it, that we have nothing to fear from that disposition to examine every public measure, to censure ministers of state, and to be restless and clamorous, which has hitherto characterized us. On the contrary, we shall have every thing to fear when this disposition is lost. As soon as a people grow secure, and cease to be quick in taking alarms, they are undone.”

Yes, Sir, such is the account which this great man gave, many years ago, of the British constitution and people. From it we may learn the great weakness of the most penetrating human judgment; and, from your approbation of that account, we may also learn your anxious desire of perverting our rational powers, rather than give up one tittle of your destructive scheme of liberty. Dare you in plain terms say, that we ought to censure ministers of state, without regarding whether

their conduct be blameable, or praise-worthy? And that we should always be restless and clamorous, because you have thought proper to tell us, that such irrational procedure hath hitherto characterized us?—For shame, Sir, think seriously of your past conduct, and, in all your future addresses to rational beings, let reason guide your pen. Solomon tells us, that a clamorous disposition is characteristick of a foolish woman, one who is simple and knoweth nothing. *The tongue of the wise, he adds, useth knowledge aright, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.*—Who, in the name of wonder, can think on a restless, unceasingly censorious, and clamorous disposition, but with contempt? And who can know the approach of danger, by the alarms of those who are constantly endeavouring to affright us?

I will venture to say, that we have every thing to fear from that disposition which you say is essentially necessary to the preservation of our constitution, when viewed in its pernicious effects in the House of Commons. The ministry is said to purchase a majority in the House of Commons with the public money, and the complaints of the people often run high against them on that head. Now supposing the fact to be true, where should the blame be laid? If the gentlemen in opposition will persist in their endeavours to frustrate the designs of the ministry in every great national concern, necessity is thereby laid upon them to secure a majority in the Houses of Parliament, cost what it will; for, whenever that majority is lost, the great state-machine stands still, the ministry must resign their places, and those who had the power to stop the wheels of government, must then be admitted into office, in order to put them in motion again. None, I presume, can imagine the ministry to be either always right, or always in the wrong. To suppose the first, we must think them more than human; and to believe the

last,

last, we must deem them worse than men. Those who only oppose the ministry sometimes, may be right; but those who oppose them always, must certainly be wrong. The first may reasonably be thought to act from conscience; the last from sinister motives. The first deserves applause, even though they may be mistaken in their opinions; the last are objects of just abhorrence, how ever distinguished they may stand by their abilities or their rank.

In order to know in which class the leaders in the present opposition should be considered, I intend, in my next letter, to take notice of some of their speeches in parliament, as they lately appeared in the public papers; and as every tree is best known by the fruit which it produces, I hope you will approve of the method now proposed by,

Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

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## L E T T E R IX.

Reverend Sir,

I shall now proceed, agreeable to promise in my last letter, to make a few remarks on some of those parliamentary speeches which have lately appeared in the public papers; and as the minority in both houses appear generally anxious that the public should be acquainted with their parliamentary conduct, I hope I shall not give them any just cause of complaint by the freedom which I now use.

The opposition in both houses appear to have spoken highly of the powerful navy and hostile intentions of the house of Bourbon; and they have indulged them-

selves, not only in exposing the weakness of Britain, but also in bestowing very high encomiums on our revolted brethren in America, at the shameful expence of candour and of truth.

The earl of Chatham, we are told, after having expatiated on the power of France, and indulged his party-spirit in exhibiting the extreme weakness of Britain and Ireland, said, "Without peace, without an immediate restoration of tranquillity, this nation is ruined and undone." This is an awful catastrophe indeed; but on what foundation, Sir, does the prediction stand? It stands upon nothing less than the invincible power of the hostile house of Bourbon, and the pitiable weakness of this country, as represented by the patriotic peer. His lordship says, "The houses of Bourbon have a formidable navy, and their coasts are lined with troops from the furthest parts, up to Dunkirk. What have you to oppose them? What are these little islands, Great Britain and Ireland? What is your defence? Nothing! Not five thousand men in this island, nor more in Ireland; nor above twenty ships of the line manned and fit for sea." It must afford great pleasure to all the real lovers of their country, to find, by the declaration of the noble lord at the head of the admiralty, that lord Chatham had egregiously misrepresented the state of the British navy. And that detection will lead every unprejudiced person to suspect his account, concerning that of our natural enemies. But why, in the name of wonder, should they line their coasts with troops, supposing their numbers sufficient, unless they apprehend our intentions to be hostile, and that we mean to invade them? It is surely incumbent on his lordship, first to prove the fact, and then to unravel the mystery,

His lordship says, " Our ministers have sought the alliance and assistance of every *pitiful, beggarly, insignificant, paltry* German prince, to cut the throats of their loyal, brave, and injured brethren in America. They have entered into mercenary treaties with those human butchers, for the purchase and sale of human blood. They have let the savages of America loose upon their innocent, unoffending brethren, to cut, mangle, sacrifice, burn, roast, and, literally, eat them."

Is this language becoming the dignity of that august assembly in which it is said to have been delivered? And shall a pensioned British peer thus deprecate his country, revile the ministry, insult his sovereign, and applaud the rebellious Americans, without incurring the just indignation of every friend to Britain?

After the above illiberal abuse of the German princes, and of our ministry for hiring their troops, and employing the Indians in the American war, his lordship asks, with an air of defiance, " Is this consistent with any part of our former conduct?" To this I answer in the affirmative. Surely his lordship could not but know that both were perfectly consistent with his own conduct in the last war. Generations to come will probably feel the effects of his then continental connections: and there is hardly a cobbler now in the kingdom but may remember, that Indians were for the first time employed, when Mr. Pitt presided at the British helm. On this occasion the behaviour of the lords Sandwich, Suffolk, Weymouth, Gower, &c. did them real honour; they spoke their sentiments freely as honest British senators; and it clearly appeared that lord Chatham had violently reprobated, in others, that which he had formerly, and in a much greater degree, allowed in himself. But we were then fighting for those very colonies

colonies which are now in actual rebellion; and America was to be conquered in Germany. That which had been deemed a mill-stone, attempted to be hung about the neck of the public by his predecessor, Mr. Fox, shone in Mr. Pitt like a diamond in a diadem.

His lordship hath blamed the Americans for claiming independence, and yet he has thought proper to style them *our loyal, brave, innocent, unoffending, and injured brethren*. But in my opinion he might, with equal propriety, have called them a black white, a light darkness, or a cold heat. This, however, is not his only inconsistency. He says, “the houses of Bourbon abet the cause of our subjects, and are ready to break with us.” And yet he adds, “the Americans are out of temper with them, on account of their back-wardness.” By the formidable power of our natural enemies, I presume he meant to terrify us; and, by the ill-humour of the Americans, he wants us meanly to sue for a destructive peace with our rebellious children.

His lordship, it seems, informed the house, that the Americans “would never submit to be slaughtered by foreign mercenaries.” But I do not find that he attempted to shew, either that death would be more welcome from the hands of their injured fellow-subjects; or that they had any greater inclination to yield their dues to the bayonet, than to the tomahawk. The truth, in my opinion, is, his lordship, by reducing us to our own native strength, meant to prevent the parent-state from establishing its just authority over the revolted colonies. If this be patriotism, may Britons in future be utter strangers to it.

I hope none will think that I wish to lessen that merit which his lordship justly acquired by his vigorous prosecution

secution of the last war; though, should the duke of Richmond's remark on the great increase of our national stock of ship-timber be allowed generally and impartially to operate, it must occasion a very considerable diminution \*. However that may be, I wish his lordship seriously to consider, that no degree of former merit can possibly sanctify his late conduct; nor can the most elegant and persuasive oratory, efface from our minds, that effusion of kindred blood which hath been occasioned by the repeal of an *uninforced stamp act.*

To say that the British legislature hath a right to declare what acts, committed in America, shall subject the parties to fine, to imprisonment, to whipping, to the pillory, and even to death; but cannot legally say what shall subject them to the payment of a single penny of their money in the name of a tax; may be consistent with the principles of modern liberty, but, in my opinion, it is totally repugnant to the dictates of common-sense.

Lord Abingdon, we are told, complained, " That " such of the Americans, as were *nicknamed rebels*, " and had been taken while gloriously fighting for " freedom, brought over to England, and thrown " into gaols, were here treated with the most savage " barbarity."

If his lordship really expressed himself in the above terms, words are incapable of expressing my indignation. The authority by which the prisoners in question

\* Lord Sandwich having observed that he had increased our stock of ship-timber from 33711 loads, to above sixty-two thousand; the duke of Richmond said, " the noble lord, with a great deal " more money than his predecessor, had purchased a great deal " more timber; but there is not much occasion to ride the " high horse, on account of any extraordinary merit in this par- " ticular. What money can accomplish, all men know."

have acted, being unacknowledged by any legal state, they are, and ought to be deemed pirates. Surely his lordship knows, that, far from wishing to meet with any of our ships of war, they have been fighting for freedom in the same manner as highwaymen do, when they invade the rights and seize the property of innocent and unoffending individuals. If I am wrong in this particular, I call upon his lordship, and also on you, to shew wherein I am mistaken. Pray, Sir, what would you have thought the man deserved, who should have dared to have spoken in such terms of those who appeared in the rebellion in the year forty-five? Is rebellion less criminal, and consequently less punishable in the Americans now, than it was in Scotchmen then? That the Scotch rebels wanted to set a popish pretender upon the British throne, is true; but I call on you, Sir, and also on all the sons of faction throughout the kingdom, to remember, that the American rebels are now aiming at the utter destruction of the British state! The prejudices of youth and education must, in some measure be allowed to plead in excuse for the former, but these very prejudices, in conjunction with every law, civil as well as sacred, must clearly and totally condemn the latter.

I am, Reverend Sir, yours, &c.

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## L E T T E R X.

Reverend Sir,

HAVING made remarks on some passages in the published speeches of the lords Chatham and Abingdon, in my last letter, I shall now offer a few cursory remarks on those of lord Camden, the duke of Richmond, and lord

lord Shelburne. Your favourite author, Montesquieu, said, " That the British state will perish when the *legislative* power shall become more corrupt than the *executive* :" but in my opinion we have much more reason to fear its dissolution, when a restless and indiscriminating opposition shall become powerful enough to stop the wheels of government. I cannot help thinking that we have much to fear from that disposition in men of rank to oppose the ministry, merely to effect the resignation of their places. And I am astonished to find that any of the sensible *public* should wish them to succeed, when, by looking back on what is past, they cannot expect them to deviate much from the steps of their predecessors.

Lord Camden, in advising a cessation of arms, said, " That it would beget a confidence in the Americans which we have never yet given them :" but his lordship must surely have forgotten our truly parental conduct towards them, and particularly the part which we acted in their quarrel with the French in the last war. Had we not begot too much confidence in them, by giving up our conquests in the West-Indies, instead of allowing the French to reposess Canada, I will venture to say, we should not at this time have heard of the independent states of America.

His lordship has thought proper to say, that " The Americans have never been treated properly, or as the descendants of Englishmen :" but his lordship ought to have recollect<sup>d</sup>, that, as far as their situation could well admit, they have always enjoyed the privileges of Britons, without contributing, in any considerable degree, to the support of the state. Our having advanced more than one million to pay their own forces, employed in their own cause in the last war, affords an incontestible proof, that so far have we been from

from endeavouring to hurt them, that we would not even suffer them to hurt themselves. At that time they had not boasted, that "their internal resources " were great."

The earl of Suffolk having asserted that the Americans had endeavoured to engage the Indians on their side, and that their delegates had refused to treat with our commissioners at Staten island, unless they consented to negotiate with them as sovereign states; he was opposed in both by the duke of Richmond.

His grace, we are told, said "he was confident " the first was a mistake; and he had great and sound " reason to believe that his lordship had misrepresented " the last:" but both were clearly proved; and his grace's subsequent conduct deserves particular notice. He asked, if the thirteen colonies were not at that instant independent states? In direct opposition to his former great and sound reason, he insisted that the standing out against their title of independence was a ridiculous and dangerous punctilio, and, humiliating consideration! he declared that, " in his opinion, no " terms whatever would be accepted by America, unless " her independence was made the ground-work of the " treaty.

Is it possible, Sir, to behold the above conduct, without seeing a determined resolution to condemn the measures of government in every point of view? For my own part, I think the aspect of our present patriotism is truly alarming; and it pains me to observe, that some of the first men in the kingdom are eagerly persisting in a conduct, which, sooner or later, may involve the British empire in anarchy and ruin.

Lord Shelburne said we were a *deluded multitude*, and he endeavoured to prove it by the ignorance of a wealthy farmer!

farmer! His lordship is also said to have declared, ~~that~~ it was impossible to command an army at the distance of three thousand miles. But who, that remembers the prosecution and issue of the last war, can believe the assertion? "In my opinion (says he) America is "lost already; irrecoverably lost to this country. Since "we cannot have them as subjects, let us make them "our friends; the matter is practicable, and now is the "time to set about it. Between America and Great "Britain a degree of affection still subsists. Let us "withdraw our troops, and shew a real desire to come "to measures of accommodation: America will then "put a confidence in our overtures, and a war begun "in error, and continued with an equal mixture of "cruelty and absurdity, may be brought to an honour- "able and happy conclusion."

This, Sir, to every dispassionate reader, will furnish a melancholy proof of that amazing absurdity into which modern patriotism is capable of hurrying its dangerous votaries. Even the most ignorant among us must know, that the manner by which his lordship proposes to make the Americans our *friends*, is the surest way to make us *their dupes*. "The matter is practicable (he says) and "now is the time to set about it:" but, if our great expence of *blood* and *treasure* in their defence last war, has not produced the least spark of gratitude in their breasts, can we suppose that the languid war which we have been carrying on against them, has proved more efficacious in conciliating their affections? Should we withdraw our troops, every man in America would immediately conclude, that we were either unable, or afraid to continue the war; and that conclusion would certainly produce such a confidence in their own superiority, as might endanger the British dominions in every quarter of the globe. He who adviseth government to agree to

the dismemberment of the British empire, deserves to be treated as an enemy to Britain : but that Briton, capable of recommending an alliance with the revolted colonies, under a pretence of bringing the present unhappy war to an honourable and happy conclusion, may justly be deemed unworthy, even of human contempt.

His lordship, it seems, said, that “ the cruelties exercised by the Indians under general Burgoyne had excited the whole country, men, women, and children, to rise upon the British army, and come upon them with *lasses*, *pitchforks*, &c. and endeavour to destroy them.” But, as the official dispatches make no mention of any such *troops* having been in Gates’s army, I doubt the fact: and, as cruelty is seldom found coupled with true courage, I think I have great reason to believe, that the *brave* Burgoyne and his little army of heroes used their utmost endeavours to prevent acts of Indian barbarity.

If the conduct of the noble lords, on which I have been remarking, be characteristic of the real friends to Britain, I should be glad to know the marks by which her enemies stand distinguished? These men, who, from a spirit of prejudice, a thirst for power, or a love of profit, can abet the cause of our rebellious subjects, act directly contrary to their duty as subjects, and they may justly be ranked with the enemies of Britain.

The language of the lords Lyttelton and Cardiff is of a very different complexion. The first advised administration “ to exert the full strength of this country, in defence of our national honour ;” and the last “ hoped every friend to his country would see that this was not a moment for despondency ; on the contrary, it called for a singular exertion of public spirit, and he hoped the ministry would use every possible effort to subdue America.”

Lord Galloway wished that means could be devised for carrying on the war with vigour, without oppressing the people, and burthening the poor with new taxes. He proposed that the great expence, which must attend the proper efforts, should be chiefly supported by the rich and the affluent; and, as an example worthy the imitation of every real patriot, he declared his readiness to contribute largely: " for although (said his lordship) " I consider myself as the trustee of my family, I cannot " but think that I hold my fortune in trust, more especi- " ally, for the service of my country."

The earl of Suffolk said, " The spirit of a great nation " was not to be shaken by a single misfortune. That " Great Britain was not without resources; every cor- " ner of the kingdom could afford her aid. That the " spirit of this kingdom would, he doubted not, be " roused by Mr. Burgoyne's accident. It was now " necessary for every friend to this country to feel an " encrease of ardour and zeal for the preservation of her " honour and her interest, and to assist government with " hand and heart in a vigorous prosecution of the " war."

These noblemen, Sir, with the lords in office, men-  
tioned in my last letter, appear to be zealous for the  
true honour and interest of their country. May wisdom  
and integrity appear conspicuous in every part of their  
ministerial conduct; may those who seek their places at  
the imminent hazard of the state, be always disappointed;  
may the public " resist the poisonous endeavours of  
" every base incendiary, and chearfully co-operate with  
" government in its endeavours to procure a proper  
" acknowledgment of the rights of Great Britain;"  
may such an acknowledgment be soon obtained; may  
all the calamities of war quickly cease; and may peace

I and

and fraternal affection prevail throughout the British empire while sun and moon endureth.

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

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## L E T T E R XI.

Reverend Sir,

MY last contained some remarks on the speeches of Lord Camden, the duke of Richmond, and lord Shelburne, as they appeared in the public papers; and, as I find you have thought proper to make some very unjustifiable observations on the *Middlesex* election, I shall now beg leave to take particular notice of the same.

In page 49, of your Additional Observations on Civil Liberty, you say, " I hope I may add, that there was " a time when the kingdom could not have been brought " to acquiesce in what was done in the case of the " *Middlesex* election. This is a precedent which, by " giving the house of commons the power of excluding " its members at discretion, and introducing others in " their room on a minority of votes, has a tendency to " make a self-created house, and to destroy entirely " the right of representation: and a few more such pre- " cedents would completely overthrow the constitution."

Is it not matter of astonishment, Sir, that you, who are a dissenting clergyman, should venture to determine so positively on a subject which surely lies very wide of your province, and ill becomes you as a minister? Solomon says, that he who meddleth with *strife* belonging not

to

*to him, taketh a dog by the ears.* But, perhaps, you are one of the Middlesex electors, and voted for Mr. Wilkes. In that case, I think, you went no farther than you had a legal right, so long as you believed him to be duly qualified. But you knew that the house of commons had declared him to be a disqualified person previous to his third election; and you also knew, that they could not, consistent with such a declaration, admit the legality of his subsequent votes.

Although no part of the British commons can be legally controuled by any other particular part, yet may the proceedings of any part be enquired into by all the other commons, when assembled in the persons of their representatives, and either confirmed or annulled as they think meet. You know, Sir, that the house of commons has always exercised the sole right of judging in all cases respecting its own members; and though we cannot suppose their decisions to be always right, there is no other power under heaven to which those who may think themselves injured can appeal. It is well known that, in the case now under consideration, they did not extend their power beyond the walls of their own house: they only voted him ineligible to sit as a member in that house, during the sessions of the then parliament, without pretending to affect him in any other capacity.

But you say, you hope there was a time when the kingdom could not have been brought to acquiesce in what the house of commons then did. Pray, Sir, would you have had the kingdom to have used violence to the house of commons for exercising their exclusive right of determining in such cases? Mr. Wilkes's votes on the third election being illegal, on account of the antecedent declaration of his ineligibility, Mr. Luttrell had a clear majority over Mr. Serjeant Whitaker; and there-

fore, no suspicion can arise, from the precedent in question, of the house of commons ever becoming a self-created house.

You say that a few more such precedents would completely overthrow the constitution. But can any man, who has the proper use of his mental powers, believe your assertion? Surely every unprejudiced person must know, that such proceedings, instead of overthrowing the British constitution, tend to establish it.

The Middlesex electors knew that the whole kingdom was open to their choice, one man only excepted; and yet so determined were they in favour of their first object, that they set themselves in open and avowed opposition to the house of commons. To say they were right in so doing, would in effect be saying, that a part is greater than the whole; which is contrary to one of the clearest dictates of common sense. You must know, Sir, notwithstanding what you have said to the contrary, that the house of commons is the only independent and ultimate judge respecting its own members and their constituents; and that the free exercise of this power is the constitutional right of that house, and justly deemed one of the great bulwarks of British liberty.

A number of the London and Middlesex electors, with several other zealots for modern liberty, not only petitioned the king, on that occasion, to dissolve the parliament, but were extremely clamorous on account of his non-compliance. But had the king gone so far as to have dissolved the parliament, without being requested by the general majority of the British electors, his conduct, in the opinion of every unprejudiced person, would have been stamped with imprudence and injustice. Imprudent, in prostituting that great prerogative of the crown to the base views of its enemies; and unjust, in dismissing the representatives of the whole kingdom at the

the unreasonable request of a few. Must nothing be deemed consonant to liberty, but that which favours the self-interested views of those who set themselves in continual opposition to the measures of government? And are we to proceed to violence whenever you, or any of the enemies to good order and legal government, think proper to tell us that the constitution is in danger? Had not your rooted prejudice in favour of the American rebellion rendered you regardless of truth, I am persuaded, you could not have said, that the precedent in question had a tendency to make the house of commons a self-created house, or that a few more such, would completely overthrow the British constitution.

I remain, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

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## L E T T E R XII.

Reverend Sir,

**I**N refuting your observations on the Middlesex election, in my last letter, I confined myself strictly to the measure, without saying any thing of the man. Although I have long considered the conduct of that celebrated partisan as a copy much too dark for imitation, and have often wondered to hear him so highly applauded; yet the now reduced, and still declining state of his popularity, would have induced me to remain silent on that subject, had not an expression which he is said to have lately made in the house of commons, urged me to call on your attention.

The public papers have informed us, that Mr. Wilkes, in exclaiming against general Burgoyne's proclamation,

concerning the Indians, as being similar to the orders which the prophet Samuel gave to Saul for the utter destruction of the Amalekites, called the Old Testament, or history in which it is recorded, " the most bloody and the most barbarous\*."

If this, Sir, is really true, you must surely shrink back with horror from its blasphemous aspect. The Old Testament is that sure word of prophecy to which our Saviour and his disciples always referred for the proof of their mission, and doctrine. And shall the man, who dares to call it the most bloody and barbarous of all histories be entrusted with the power of legislation in a Christian country? For my part, I could not have sat in the British senate, and heard one of its members make such a daring attack on the sacred oracles, without moving the house for his immediate expulsion. Nor can I imagine that such an expulsion, or any number of them, could in the least endanger the British constitution. In the case of the Middlesex election you have indeed attempted to make us believe that our constitution is exceedingly tender in its nature; but, on another occasion, you have thought proper to speak in a very different strain.

In page 44, you say, " The government of this country, in particular, is so well balanced, and the institutions of our common laws are so admirable, and have taken such deep root, that we can bear much decay before our liberties fall."

Can you view the striking contrast between the above, and that which you have said on the Middlesex election, without undergoing a temporary suffusion? *Inconsistency,*

\* Whoever compares 1 Samuel, xv. 2, 3, with Exodus xvii. 14, 15, and with Deutronomy, xxv. 17, 18, 19, will see that the destruction of the Amalekites was agreeable to the oath, and at the express command of the Almighty.

Sir,

Sir, is generally the concomitant of  *falsehood*; and falsehood is highly unworthy of your character as a man and as a Christian. Although, in the page before quoted, you tell us of the great security which we derive from the peculiar excellency of our government and our laws, yet so eager have you been to fill the minds of your fellow-subjects with apprehensions of national *ruin*, that you have quoted from others whatever you thought could be made subservient to that pernicious design.

In page 47, you say, “ Montesquieu observes, that “ the preservation of liberty in England requires that it “ should have no land forces.” Dr. Ferguson calls the establishment of standing armies a “ fatal *refinement* in “ the present state of civil government.” And “ Mr. “ Hume (you add) pronounces our standing army a “ mortal distemper in the British constitution, of which “ it must *inevitably* perish.”

It will not, I presume, be thought strange that I take the liberty to differ from the authors here quoted. I owe no such deference to Doctor Price as to yield an implicit assent either to his, or to their doctrine.— I have had occasion, Sir, to take notice of your first author in my eighth letter; and, hitherto, I see no reason to alter my sentiments. I am clearly of opinion that our land-forces serve to preserve true liberty, by enabling the civil magistrate to prevent *your's*, with all its horrid consequences, from prevailing. You know that the civil magistrates have often been obliged to call the military to their aid, in order to give that protection to our property and our lives, which we have a right to expect from the legal government of our country. You also know, Sir, though perhaps you may not be honest enough to acknowledge, that the superior discipline of the military has frequently prevented the shedding of *blood*, even on the side of an infatuated mob, whilst it

has preserved the peaceable and unoffending members of the community from violence and ruin.

I will not say how far the establishment of standing armies, if carried to an undue pitch, may become “ a fatal refinement in civil government;” but I am persuaded that the British forces not only afford us protection from foreign invasion, but are also well qualified to prevent the fatal effects of your wild refinement in liberty.

I cannot, with Mr. Hume, look on “ our standing army as a mortal distemper in the British constitution, of which it must inevitably perish;” on the contrary, I am well convinced that it has often prevented the mortal distemper of licentiousness from destroying both the British constitution and people. When the base attempts which have been made by you, and other enemies to government, are duly considered; surely we ought to think ourselves much indebted to the military, under Providence, for the preservation of our lives.

I cannot imagine how you, a minister of the Gospel, could think of calling Mr. Hume to your aid! Here, Sir, I think it necessary to call on your particular attention. To produce the greatest sceptic of the age as a positive authority on your side, must shock every friend to Christianity: and to quote his prediction of a most dreadful event as inevitable, must rouse the indignation of all who have the least regard for truth.—That baneful author “ doubts if *truth* be at all within the reach of human capacity,” and says, “ that those who believe any thing *certainly*, are fools.—That the human soul is nothing but a bundle of perceptions that succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux.—That *truth* is nothing but the vivacity of our ideas.—That we can conceive an object non-existent this moment, and existent the next, without joining it to the idea of a cause.—That we

“ can form no rational conclusion at all concerning the  
 “ cause of the universe.—That we have no idea of any  
 “ power, nor of any being endowed with any power,  
 “ *much less* of one endowed with infinite power.—That  
 “ justice is not a natural, but an artificial virtue, depend-  
 “ ing wholly on the arbitrary institutions of men, and,  
 “ previous to the establishment of civil society, not at  
 “ all incumbent.—That adultery must be practised,  
 “ if men would obtain all the advantages of life; that,  
 “ if generally practised, it would soon cease to be scan-  
 “ dalous; and that, if practised secretly and frequently,  
 “ it would by degrees come to be no *crime* at all.”

These, Sir, are, according to Dr. Beattie, in his *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*, some of the tenets of your author; but they seem fitter for the infernal regions, than for a Christian country! Nay the Scriptures assure us, that even the devils believe and tremble. Was the prince of darkness to turn author, he would probably pause a little before he promulgated doctrines so exceedingly subversive of all that is valuable to the rational creation: but whether you would hesitate a moment in quoting a favourite passage from the Satanic publication, your past conduct will best determine. If there be any so far lost to religion and common sense, as to declare their approbation of the above tenets, I beg leave to say, they are dangerous members in a Christian society.

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

## LETTER XIII.

Reverend Sir,

HAVING made some objections to your quotations from Montesquieu, Dr. Ferguson, and Mr. Hume, in my last letter; I shall now proceed to some further remarks on your "Additional Observations on Civil " Liberty, &c."

After telling us the imminent danger we are in of a public *bankruptcy*, you say, in page 67, " We should " think of nothing but guarding ourselves against the " danger of such a situation, by restricting our paper " currency, and gradually discharging our public debts. " In giving this admonition, I look upon myself as do- " ing my country one of the best offices in my power; " and acting in the character of one who calls to an- " other to awake, who is sleeping over a precipice. " But I know I call in vain."

What astonishing inconsistency is here! What matchless effrontery! How dare you venture to tell rational beings that you look upon yourself as doing your country one of the best services in your power, when, by your own account, it is, in effect, nothing! Why, Sir, will you call to one who is sleeping over a precipice to awake, if you *know*, at the time of your calling, that your efforts will be in vain? If any merit can arise from the performance of such an office, you are extremely welcome to the full enjoyment of it. Pray, Sir, allow me to ask, whether all your boasted services to your own country are not nearly allied to this pompous nothing? Would you call to the British rulers to avoid an impending danger, if you really expected to be heard? And have you not

design-

*designedly chosen such times as rendered their hearing you highly imprudent?*

I sincerely wish that our legislature would guard against the danger of public bankruptcy, by restraining our paper currency, and gradually reducing our public debts; but will any, but the enemies of Britain, wish them to do nothing else? Ought they to use no methods for preventing our modern patriots from carrying their destructive schemes into execution? And would you have them to pay no attention to the colonies now in actual rebellion against their parent state?

In page 73 you say, “ With the colonies united to “ us, we might be the greatest and happiest nation that “ ever existed. But with the colonies separated from “ us, and in alliance with *France* and *Spain*, we are no “ more a people. They appear, therefore, to be indeed “ worth any price: our existence depends on keeping “ them.”

Although I am far from entertaining such high notions of the importance of our American colonies, yet I think they are of such value as to justify the coercive measures now carried on for bringing them back to those paths of duty from which they have so ungratefully swerved. — Being fully convinced of the very unnatural disposition of our American children, I should be extremely sorry to think that the British community depended necessarily upon its union with the colonies for its existence. We have great reason to believe that the revolted colonies have been long soliciting an alliance with France, though hitherto without any considerable effect. Whether such disappointment has been owing to their unparalleled ingratitude to their parent state, (the mildest government now upon earth) or that both France and Spain have been over-awed by our superior naval power, I shall not take upon me to determine; but, be that as it may, it could

could never be expected that either of these powers should risk their own settlements, by giving such effectual assistance to our American brethren as to enable them to establish their independence: although we can easily imagine them willing to assist in weakening Great Britain and her colonies so, that both may at last fall an easy prey to the ambitious views of the house of Bourbon. If you really believe that our existence as a people, necessarily depends on our keeping the American colonies, you must admit that he who adviseth to withdraw our troops, and give the Americans up as subjects, is an enemy to the British state. But was not this the advice lately given, and even pressed, by one of your *excellent peers*? And is not that very peer said to have had a great share in the direction of your political conduct?—Think, Sir, of your astonishing opposition to the British government; reflect seriously on your daring attempts to serve the natural and unnatural enemies of your country, and then let your conscience approve of your conduct if it can.

Your very services, Sir, are clearly intended to wound, if not to destroy the British state! In page 44 and 45 of your “Observations on Civil Liberty, &c.” speaking of the bank securities, you tell us, that, “should deficiencies in the revenue bring government into any difficulties, all the securities would lose their value, and the bank and government, with all private and public credit, would fall together!” And you farther say that, “if it were but suspected by the public in general, that the taxes were so fallen, as not to produce enough to pay the interest of the public debt, besides bearing the ordinary expences of the nation, an alarm would spread of the most dangerous tendency.” This, Sir, was your language in your first publication; let us see what you say on the subject in

your

you last. In a note, page 103, you tell us, " The taxes charged with the interest of the public debts proving often deficient, the shortest way of discharging the arrears has been often taken, by adding them to the principal, and paying compound interest for money."

If you are to be credited, Sir, here is more than a suspicion; here is a positive assertion, that the taxes, charged with the interest of the public debts, have often proved deficient; and that such deficiency has been often added to the principal: yet the British state stands firm, maugre all your shameful efforts. Either your positive assertions have not been able to raise that suspicion which you so ardently wished for; or such suspicion, supposing it to have been raised, has not produced those dire effects which you have predicted. Can any believe, that the above conduct is really expressive of the true friend to Britain? If it be tried by the rule which our Saviour hath given in Mat. vii. 20, *by their fruits ye shall know them,\** you will clearly appear to be its enemy! Let me advise you to make a fair enquiry into the conduct of Great Britain and her colonies, throughout the unhappy contest; review, with as much accuracy and impartiality as possible, your own parricidious conduct; and, by a real contrition for your past misconduct and a proper assurance of future amendment, may you remove the resentment, obtain the pardon, and enjoy the confidence of your much injured country.

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

\* In your sermon upon this text, on the fifth of November last, you said, " These words form an unerring rule for us to judge of men by their actions. Whatever a man's actions are, such is the man. However fair and flourishing the leaves of any tree may appear, yet, if the fruit is not good, the tree is certainly bad."

## LETTER XIV.

Reverend Sir,

IN my last letter I observed, that your advice, concerning the restricting of our paper currency, and the gradual discharge of our public debts, was ill-timed, and clearly intended to favour the cause of our rebellious brethren: I also made some remarks on the importance and ingratititude of the revolted colonies; and, by comparing pages 44, 45, of your "Observations on "Civil Liberty," with a note in page 103, of your "Additional Observations, &c." I shewed that your design was either to produce a general bankruptcy, or to render us pusillanimous and contemptible, by exciting false apprehensions of national danger. I shall now proceed to take notice of another of your quotations from your favourite author, Montesquieu, and shall offer some objections to the American case as you have stated it.

In page 76 you say, "Montesquieu has observed that "England, in planting colonies, should have *commerce*, "not *dominion*, in view, the encrease of dominion being "incompatible with the security of public liberty. Every "advantage that could arise from commerce they have "offered us without reserve, and their language to us "has been—restrict as much as you please, in acquiring "property, by regulating our trade for your advantage; "but claim not the disposal of that property after it has "been acquired. Be satisfied with the authority you "exercised over us before the present reign. *Place us* "where we were in 1763.—On these terms they have "repeatedly sued for a reconciliation."

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By your frequent quotations from Montesquieu, it is plain that you value yourself much upon that author: but great as he may be in your esteem, you cannot imagine that he is altogether free from error. I hope I have made it appear, to the satisfaction of every dispassionate reader, that, in some things, he has not only asserted positively without *evidence*, but even contrary to it. Although it may be true that England, in planting colonies, ought to have *commerce principally* in view; yet we should consider that *commerce*, without *dominion*, must always be at the option of the colonists. Can you look back, Sir, on the behaviour of our American brethren, and say, that their *will* is a *basis* sufficiently firm and permanent for us to rest our future commerce upon? Without enquiring whether the encrease of *dominion* can justly be deemed incompatible with the security of public liberty, I will venture to say, that the conduct of that state which attempts either to *plant*, or to *increase* colonies without *dominion*, is absolutely incompatible with common sense. You say that "every "advantage that could arise from *commerce*, they have "offered us without reserve." But from your connections, Sir, you must know that the direct contrary is true; namely, that they have always *reserved* as much as they possibly could.

The distinction which you have made between our restricting the colonies in their acquiring of property, by regulating their trade for our advantage, and our claiming the disposal of that property after it has been acquired, is worthy of yourself. Pray, Sir, allow me to ask, what real difference can it make to our American brethren, whether the British legislature occasion their selling certain commodities at 5 per cent. less than they otherwise would, by making an *act* for restricting such branch of their trade in our favour; or, instead of such

restriction, should impose a sum equal to 5 per cent. upon the same articles in the name of a duty? Perhaps taxes are, in some cases, less prejudicial than monopolies. Be that as it may; I ask, by what rule do you admit the right of the British legislature to bind the colonies in the one case, and deny it in the other?

Will you allow that our legislature hath a right to make laws to affect their *trade*, their *liberty*, and even their *lives*, but not their *purses*? Personal liberty surely is, and ought to be, much dearer to them than a small portion of their property; and the union between their *souls* and their *bodies* is much more intimate and important, than that which can possibly subsist between any man and his money. I call upon you, and on every inconsistent abettor of the American rebellion throughout the kingdom, to consider the above seriously; to weigh the whole matter impartially; and then to vouchsafe me an open and a candid answer.

I have always understood that we were perfectly satisfied with the authority we exercised over the colonies before the present reign, until their rebellious opposition to government rendered a farther exertion necessary. You well know, Sir, and had you entertained a proper regard for candour and justice, you would likewise have owned, that the British state hath always exercised its legislative authority over the colonies. You must know that many *acts* have been passed from the twelfth of Charles the Second up to the present reign, which clearly prove it; and that several of these acts were for the express purpose of taxation. You must also know, Sir, that, ever since the twenty-fifth of the same reign, taxes have actually been raised in America, by the express authority of the British legislature.—But this matter hath been so ably discussed and so fully proved, in two pamphlets, entitled, “*The Rights of Great Britain asserted*,” and,

and, " An Answer to the Declaration of the American " Congress," that it is unnecessary for me to say any thing farther on that head.

If, by desiring to be placed where they were in 1763, they mean, that no burden should be laid upon them by the British legislature subsequent to that period; their request is astonishingly unreasonable. It is well known, Sir, that we entered into the last war, not only on their account, but at their most earnest solicitation. In the prosecution of that war, we almost doubled our national debt; and a proportional increase of our taxes, for the payment of the additional interest, was the unavoidable consequence.

These things, Sir, being incontestibly true, with what face can the Americans plead for an immunity? In open violation of justice, and in direct contrariety to every principle of public society, they claim a right to pursue their own separate interest in all cases whatever! As Britons, they *justly* claim a right to every *privilege*; and as Americans, they *unjustly* insist on an exemption from every *duty*! These, Sir, are *facts*, which could not fail to make their demagogues here blush, were they susceptible of shame.

You know that a liberty to act as they please, independent of the British legislature, is the only *term* on which they have deigned to sue for a reconciliation. But, incapable of fully expecting it on such an unreasonable condition, and determined to refuse it on any other, they commenced hostilities against us at the very time that their last petition was on its way to the throne: and, before they could possibly hear any thing of its success, they not only invaded Canada, but issued commissions to their piratical commanders to cruise against the ships of Great Britain; and they appointed Courts of Admiralty to try and condemn them as legal prizes.

Was ever a legal government so grossly insulted? And is there a kingdom to be found upon the face of the globe, where you, and the principal promoters of the present very daring and unnatural rebellion, would not long ago have been cut off, as gangrened limbs, for the good of the body politic?

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

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## L E T T E R XV.

Reverend Sir,

**I**N my last letter I pointed out the fallacy of the American case, as stated by you in page 76 of your "Additional Observations on Civil Liberty;" and in this I beg leave to make a few remarks on those important effects which you say have been produced by our coercive measures.

In page 87 you say, "Our coercive measures have "done all for them that their warmest patriots could "have desired. They have united them among them- "selves, and bound them together under one govern- "ment. They have checked them in the career of "vicious luxury; guarded them against any further in- "fection from hence; taught them to seek all their re- "sources within themselves; instructed them in the use "of arms; and led them to form a naval and military "power which may perhaps, in time, become superior "to any force that can attack them, and prove the "means of preserving from invasion and violence, a "government of justice and virtue, to which the op- "pressed in every quarter of the globe may fly, and "find peace, protection, and liberty.—In short, these

"mea-

" measures have, in all probability, hastened that dis-  
 " ruption of the *new* from the *old* world, which will  
 " begin a new *era* in the annals of mankind; and pro-  
 " duce a revolution more important, perhaps, than any  
 " that has happened in human affairs. As a friend,  
 " therefore, to the general interest of mankind, I ought,  
 " probably, to rejoice in those measures; and to bless  
 " that all-governing Providence, which, often, out of  
 " the evil intended by wretched mortals, brings the  
 " greatest good.—But when I consider the *present* suf-  
 " ferings which these measures must occasion, and the  
 " *catastrophe* with which they threaten Great Britain;  
 " I am shocked; and feel myself incapable of looking  
 " forward, without distress, to the fate of an empire,  
 " once united and happy, but now torn to pieces; and  
 " falling a sacrifice to despotic violence and blindness."

Here, Sir, is such striking truth, followed with such  
 shameful falsehood, as must fill every attentive reader  
 with astonishment! Can you, after the above declaration,  
 say, that the leading men in the colonies have not long  
 ago had independence in their view? " Our coercive  
 " measures (say you) have done all for them that their  
 " warmest patriots could have desired." By their warmest  
 patriots, I presume, you mean those whom all good sub-  
 jects to the British crown call principal leaders in the  
 American rebellion; such as Hancock, Adams, Frank-  
 lin, Washington, &c. And what have they been de-  
 siring? Why, nothing less, you say, than the being  
 united among themselves, and bound together under one  
 government! What, Sir, do you now unmask your  
 American darlings? In your Observations on Civil  
 Liberty, you thought proper to say that they dreaded  
 independence as a calamity: but now you honestly tell  
 us, that they wish to be united among themselves, and  
 bound together under one government. A government,

which they surely intend to be totally independent of the mother country. That very country which hath so long nourished and protected them, at a great expence of her treasure and her blood.

If we have really checked them in their career of vicious luxury, and guarded them against any further infection from hence, we have done them a very essential service, which ought to be placed to the credit of our account. May Heaven guard the whole British empire against its future growth and destructive consequences !

You say the American patriots desire to be taught to seek all their resources within themselves ; to be instructed in the use of arms ; and to be led to form a naval and military power which may become superior to any force that can attack them : and yet these patriots, like many of their party here, complain loudly of those very measures which you say have completely answered their wishes. Either your assertions are false, or the above complaints are extremely absurd. Have you forgotten, Sir, or does it not suit your seditious purpose to remember, their non-importation agreement, their resisting the authority of the British parliament, the many insults offered to their rightful sovereign, and their repeated acts of outrage and rebellion. Surely, Sir, you must know that the coercive measures, of which you complain, would never have existed, but for those very things which you say they produced. Whatever *your wishes* may be, with respect to the naval and military power of the Americans, I hope it will never be superior to that of Great Britain in any respect.—May British freedom continue inviolate to the latest posterity ; and may the supreme authority of our legislature, over every part of our dominions, be co-extended !

Your calling the present usurped authority in America,  
“ a government of justice and virtue, to which the op-  
“ pressed

“ pressed in every quarter of the globe may fly and find  
 “ peace, protection, and liberty;” must fill the soul  
 of every dispassionate reader with indignation. When  
 I consider their diabolical behaviour to those who, from  
 a laudable principle of loyalty to their king and attach-  
 ment to their parent state, refused to join in the present  
 unnatural rebellion; I am astonished at your matchless  
 effrontery! When I duly reflect on their many arbitrary  
*acts*, their wanton exercise of military discipline, their  
 unjust confiscations of private property, the illegal im-  
 prisoning of those whose personal liberty ought to have  
 been as sacred as their own, the cruel banishment of  
 many of them without any shadow of trial, the *unpar-  
 alleled perjuries* of which they stand clearly guilty, and  
 the shocking murders which they have frequently com-  
 mitted, I find myself under the disagreeable necessity of  
 concluding, that the encomium which you have bestowed  
 on the revolted Americans, is a falsehood so great that  
 language does not afford a name for it. To make vice  
 bear some resemblance to virtue, has been a practice no  
 less common than successful with the grand foe. But  
 to call the highest injustice and the most flagrant vices,  
 by the sacred names of their contrary virtues; is a species  
 of deception which seems to have been reserved for the  
 peculiar talents of the celebrated Doctor Price.

Looking on the disruption of the *new* from the *old*  
 world as an event certainly to happen, you tell us that  
 our coercive measures have, in all probability, hastened  
 it. But I would advise you, Sir, to avoid being elated  
 on the imaginary prospect. I hope that the “ Wicked  
 “ (on both sides the Atlantic) will be snared in the works  
 “ of their own hands,” and that, “ in the net which  
 “ they have hid for others, their own feet will be taken.  
 “ A wise king,” saith Solomon, “ scattereth the wicked,  
 “ and bringeth the wheel over them.”—You say the

forementioned disruption "will begin a new *era* in the "annals of mankind; and produce a revolution more "important, perhaps, than any that has happened in "human affairs." But although *new* it certainly would be, and important it might probably prove; I sincerely wish that it may never arrive.

You speak of yourself "as a friend to the general "interest of mankind." But can you expect that any of your unprejudiced readers will think you entitled to that character? From the whole tenor of your conduct, I cannot avoid believing, that you would rejoice in any measures which would enable our revolted brethren in America to prevail over their parent state.—May disappointment attend all your unnatural wishes; and may we have reason "to bless that all-governing Providence, "which, often, out of the evil intended by wretched "mortals, brings the greatest good."

Surely, Sir, you have great reason to be shocked, and to feel yourself incapable of looking forward, without distress, to those dreadful consequences which have happened, and are still likely to happen, through your seditious doctrine. As though it were not enough for your *pious* Americans to be as free as the freest people on earth, you formerly could say, when speaking against the British constitution, that our not being free, was no reason why they should be in the same predicament. But now, being disposed to charge the British government with coercive measures, you call us a once united and happy people. Thus we are either a free and happy people, or we are "torn to pieces and falling a sacrifice "to despotic violence and blindness," just as you think it will best suit your rebellious purpose. Here, Sir, I beg leave to refer you to what you have said in page 52 of your "Additional Observations on Civil Liberty."

" At

“ At present, however, (say you) it must be acknowledged that we enjoy a degree of liberty, civil and religious, which has seldom been paralleled among mankind. We ought to rejoice in this happiness, and to be grateful to that benevolent Disposer of all events who blesses us with it.”

Now, Sir, I ask you seriously, whether your conduct has corresponded with that which you here recommend? You certainly know that it has been as opposite to it as darkness is to light. If we now enjoy such a degree of civil and religious liberty as has seldom been paralleled among mankind, what monsters of wickedness must you and your rebellious brethren appear! May we be truly thankful for that exuberant *freedom* which we enjoy under the legal government of our country; and may we be ever sedulous in guarding against the despotic violence and blindness of those, who are incessantly endeavouring to inflame the minds of their deluded votaries, to raise commotions in the state, and to tear the empire to pieces!

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

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## L E T T E R . XVI.

Reverend Sir,

I Again crave your attention to a few further remarks on your pamphlet, entitled, “ Observations on Civil Liberty,” &c.

In page 148 you say, “ Ministers have of late sought to remove the public apprehensions, by general accounts of the weakness of powers, which from the

“ circumstances of former wars, as well as national pre-  
 “ judices, have been felt by the people as jealous rivals,  
 “ or formidable enemies.—I wish it was possible for me  
 “ to confirm these accounts, and by contrasting the pre-  
 “ ceding state of our debts with a similar one of those  
 “ of *France*, to shew that from this in particular we  
 “ have nothing to fear.”

You tell us in what manner ministers have lately sought to remove the public apprehensions ; and that you wish it was possible for you to confirm what they have said. But have you given the smallest proof of your sincerity in this matter ? Setting your own testimony aside, the direct contrary will appear evident to every unprejudiced reader. Our ministers, like honest men, have sought to remove those apprehensions, which our false patriots, by magnifying the power, if not misrepresenting the designs, of France, are continually endeavouring to raise in the minds of the people ; and you have certainly done your utmost to counteract them. Although, in giving an account of any matter, no consideration whatever ought to induce any man to deviate in the least from truth ; yet may he avoid saying any thing on the subject, when duty does not forbid his silence. Nay, further, it is certainly the indispensable duty of every one to avoid all such declarations of truth, as appear to be more likely to injure than serve the parties interested. Pray, Sir, what obligation could there lie upon you to enter on this subject ? Can you truly say, that your principal design was not to intimidate the British state, in order to serve the revolted colonies ? That which may be highly serviceable at one time, may, at another, be very hurtful. Had you chosen a time of perfect tranquillity, your friendly wishes for Britain might probably have gained some degree of credit : but when the American contest, with the active part which you have

taken

taken therein, is duly considered; credulity itself must confess your guilt. Suppose two armies on the point of coming to a close engagement: what would you think of the man who should step forth into the narrow interval, loudly proclaiming the extreme weakness of his own army, and the irresistible power of the other? Would you not think both armies worthy of the highest applause, should they mutually suspend hostilities, until such unnatural behaviour received its just demerits? In the above portrait behold your own conduct: and, when an unnatural predilection for our revolted brethren urge you to abet their rebellion, endeavour to remember, that however their unnatural wishes may tempt them to approve of the *treason*, they, even they, Sir, must in their conscience despise the traitor.

In page 154 you say, "In point of territory, and number of inhabitants, the two countries will bear no comparison. We have hitherto opposed *France* by our free spirit, and our colonies; and to them chiefly we owe our prosperity and victories."

The superiority of France, with respect to extent of territory and number of inhabitants, is so generally known here, that your publishing it cannot be supposed to do either good or harm. I readily admit, that our free spirit and our colonies, have occasioned our vigorous opposition to France in the two last wars; and that to them chiefly we owe our national *debt*, and our numbers *slain* by sea and land. But pray, Sir, what do you mean by our *free spirit*? You will easily see in what sense I have taken it up, although I have some suspicion that you intend it should be understood as a species of your Utopian freedom. Surely you can never expect to introduce your wild scheme of liberty into the British army and navy? Was any of our soldiers or seamen to claim the privilege of being their own *legislators*, insist on

being guided by their own *will*, and of doing what they *pleased*, they might probably be soon made sensible of their folly at the halberts or the gangway.—The brave British legions, although no better than abject *slaves*, according to your definition of liberty, have often triumphed over the numerous armies of France: whilst our adventurous seamen, those *peerless* sons of courage, have animated our stupendous wooden fortresses, boldly explored the shores of distant kingdoms, and displayed the conquering power of Britannia's thunder to admiring worlds.

I am, Reverend Sir, yours, &c.

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## L E T T E R XVII.

Reverend Sir,

**I**N my last letter, I pointed out your unjustifiable conduct in contrasting the resources and power of France with those of Britain, as set forth in pages 148, 154, of your “Additional Observations on Civil Liberty, &c.” and, in order to close my remarks on that pamphlet, I shall now proceed to take notice of a declaration said to have been drawn up by a committee of the American congress in June 1775, as stated by you, and commented on in the two last pages.

As a matter of the utmost importance to the public you tell us, in p. 175, that, “In a committee of congress “in June 1775, a declaration was drawn up, containing an offer to *Great Britain*, that the colonies would “not only continue to grant extraordinary aids in time “of war, but also, if allowed a free commerce, pay “into the *sinking fund* such a sum annually for one “hundred years, as would be more than sufficient in that “time,

“ time, if faithfully applied, to extinguish all the present debts of *Britain*. Or, provided this was not accepted, that, to remove the groundless jealousy of *Britain* that the colonies aimed at independence, and an abolition of the Navigation *Act*, which, in truth, they had never intended; and also, to avoid all future disputes about the right of making that and other acts for regulating their commerce for the general benefit, they would enter into a covenant with *Britain*, that she should fully possess and exercise that right for one hundred years to come.”

Here, Sir, is such an instance of effrontery as must excite the resentment of every reader. Surely none could imagine that even an American congress could have been capable of addressing this kingdom in terms so egregiously false and absurd, but for your astonishing want of modesty in publishing it.

Our jealousy, that the colonies aimed at independence and an abolition of the Navigation *Act*, they are pleased to style groundless: and yet, by offering to enter into a covenant with *Britain*, in order “ to avoid all future disputes about the right of making that and other acts for regulating their commerce for the general benefit,” they, in effect, prove that our jealousy on that head has been too well grounded. To enter into a covenant presupposes a freedom and independence in the covenanting parties, respecting the subject matter of their contract.—But what do our American brethren propose to settle with *Britain* by contract? Why nothing less, you say, than the full possession and exercise of the right of making the Navigation *Act*, and other *acts*, for regulating the commerce of the colonies for the general benefit. Could you, Sir, could the congress, or could any rebel on earth, at that time, believe, that Great *Britain* would ever so far forget her supreme authority over her colonies, as to enter

enter into covenant with them for the performance of that, which, of herself, she has long exercised the right of commanding ?

The whole of this covenant, proposed by the American congress, is briefly this. They would engage to pay a certain sum into the sinking-fund annually, for the space of *one hundred years*, on condition that we should allow them “ a free commerce.” Or they would allow us an exclusive right to their trade for the space of *one hundred years*, on condition of their being exempted from paying any money for the support of the British state. Surely every dispassionate reader must allow, that this is a strange alternative for colonists to propose to their parent-state. If there have been disputes concerning our right to make acts for regulating the commerce of the colonies for the general benefit, our jealousy of their having aimed at independence and an abolition of the Navigation Act, cannot be deemed groundless. The ostensive design of the proposed covenant being to obviate the former, affords the most convincing proof that the congress well knew the falsity of the latter.

Again, they propose to allow us the full exercise of a limited right over them: but mark their matchless im-pudence ! It is only for the short space of *one hundred years to come*. Thus the congress, in the very act of allowing us a right, mean to destroy our right; and, by a pretence of removing our jealousy of their having aimed at independence, they intend to establish their independence.—This, Sir, is the important matter which you, and your excellent peer, venture to recommend to our acceptance ! To suppose you capable of believing that such a covenant would be founded in justice ; or that it could have any tendency to promote the true interest of Britain ; would be a supposing you destitute of the common understandings of men : and yet, to believe the contrary,

I must

I must suppose you capable of doing that which, probably, the infernal spirit, if cloathed in flesh, would blush at ! I will venture to say there never was a colony settled with a design, that, at a certain period, it should be free from every obligation to the parent-state. Nor is it possible for any one to suppose, that either Great Britain, or her first settlers in America, could have entertained such extravagant notions at the time of their migration from the mother-country.—Now indeed, the colonies, freed from those dreadful apprehensions which were formerly occasioned by the vicinity of the French, and encouraged by the many unnatural efforts of their advocates here, are fiercely contending for their independence. But is there a man, either in or out of parliament, able to justify their claim ? The attempts which have been repeatedly made afford a melancholly proof, that there are some among us who can turn their backs upon *justice*, can act contrary to the clearest dictates of their *conscience*, and, glorying in their shame, can even value themselves on their being ranked with the unnatural enemies of their country.

I am, Reverend Sir, yours, &c.

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L E T T E R XVIII.

Reverend Sir,

IT is some time since I entered upon the investigation of your pamphlet, entitled “ Additional Observations on Civil Liberty,” and my last letter brought me to

the close of that publication. The exceptionable passages being very numerous, I have confined my remarks to those which appeared to be most replete with *inconsistency, falsehood, absurdity, or danger*. Whether I have acted agreeably to those obligations which I owe to my king and country as a Briton; and have paid that regard to truth, justice and candour, which ought to influence and direct the human mind in every investigation; I freely submit to the decision of the impartial public.—

I readily assent to that proposition which you advanced from Doctor Mayo's pulpit, on the fifth of November last, namely, that “every tree is unerringly known by “the fruit which it bears.” And, on examining your political tracts by this standard, I find myself under the disagreeable necessity of considering you as an abettor of the American rebellion, as a promoter of licentiousness under the sacred name of liberty, as a leader in faction, as a contemner of all legal authority, as an exciter to universal sedition, and as an enemy to the peace of human society.—Your behaviour in political matters has been such, as must distress every Briton who loves peace, regards justice, and wishes to honour your profession as a minister. Think, Sir, on the irreparable injury you have done your country; duly consider the stigma which you have fixed on the dissenting name; and seriously reflect on that disgrace, which, as a minister, you have brought upon the Christian profession.

That several of my remarks appear to be severe, I freely admit; but that severity will, in most particulars, be found to fall far short of your demerits. Your behaviour hath been such, that my ideas of your culpability, in many instances, can be but faintly expressed by the most explicit and nervous description. Sensible, however, that the human mind is liable to imposition from

from a variety of causes, I now call upon you to take a retrospective view of all that I have advanced against you. If I have misquoted, strained, or misunderstood any of your words, point out the injustice; if I have used any expressions that are too severe, refer to the passages which contain them; or, if I have injured you in any respect, you need only to exhibit your proof, and I shall evince my readiness to render ample and immediate satisfaction.—That your publications on Civil Liberty, &c. are not only calculated to dissolve every public society, but have actually been productive of the most alarming mischief in the British empire, I cannot entertain a doubt: and although I do not pretend to know what the precise motives were, which induced you to act such an unjustifiable part, it is reasonable for me to consider you, either as a tool in the hands of a long disappointed, self-interested, seditious party here; as an agent employed by the revolted colonies; as being actuated by an unnatural predilection in their favour, or as one resolved to embrace the first favourable opportunity for crossing the Atlantic, in order to settle amongst them.

You seem to have taken peculiar pleasure in magnifying the power of our natural enemies, and in extolling the unparalleled virtues and unconquerable firmness of our rebellious colonists; whilst Great Britain, formerly the admiration and envy of the world, is exhibited as an object of ridicule to the insulting nations! I am sorry to observe, by the debates published in the news-papers, that several of the leaders in opposition have expressed similar sentiments. To hear men in private life speaking in favour of the revolted colonies, is much to be lamented: and to hear those who are called patriots valuing themselves highly, on account of their pleading

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the cause of rebellion in the British senate, is truly alarming.

Several of the leaders in opposition, after commending the Americans for resisting our claims, and saying that we could not expect the French to be such fools as not to avail themselves of that advantage which our disputes afforded them, complained loudly of the underhand assistance which the Americans had received from that quarter, and insisted that we ought to chastise the French for their perfidy. Surely, Sir, it is unreasonable to blame the French for not being fools; and glaring inconsistency to say they have become the just object of war, by assisting the Americans in that revolt which the enraged gentlemen applaud. If the Americans can be justified in resisting the legal authority of their parent state, the French must surely be held blameless, respecting that assistance which they have given them, unless we can reasonably suppose, that our natural enemies lie under greater obligations to promote the interest of Britain, than our own subjects. The truth in my opinion is, many of our false patriots wish to see their country involved in a war with France; thinking, no doubt, either that the revolted colonies would reap some advantage from the contest, or that the embarrassment of the ministry would effect the resignation of those places which they ardently wish to enjoy.

Although the assistance which the French court secretly gave, or permitted to be given, to our revolted subjects, rendered them justly obnoxious to our resentment; yet common prudence required us to avoid coming to an open rupture with the former, whilst our contest with the latter remained undecided. But France, allured by the lucrative views of American commerce, tempted by the flattering hopes of reducing the superior power of

her

her ancient rival, and encouraged by the baneful speeches of our false patriots, hath not only ventured to enter into a treaty with our rebellious subjects, but, with an effrontery peculiar to them and their new allies, they have notified that villainous transaction in such terms as must excite the indignation of every Briton who feels, as he ought to do, for the injured honour and interest of his country.

I am sorry to observe, by the public papers, that our natural enemies have an able and indefatigable advocate among the British peers. The duke of Richmond is said to have declared, that France, in his opinion, had done nothing wrong in coming into such a treaty as she had made with America—That there was not an angry word in their notification of that treaty to our court. And, consequently, that there was no necessity for war to ensue.

Angry words, Sir, are not to be expected in the French notification; for, as no Frenchman can succeed to those places of emolument which the British ministry now enjoy, we cannot suppose them to be actuated by that which plainly appears to be the *primum mobile* of our present patriots. But although the French notification be necessarily devoid of those angry words which arise from a consciousness of injury received; it is surely replete with the most egregious injustice, perfidy, and insult. If the noble duke really believes that the French have done nothing wrong in bargaining with our revolted subjects, for that commerce which they well knew to be our indubitable right; I cannot entertain the highest opinion of his mental rectitude.

The exordium to the French minister's notification stated, “ that the Americans having *established* their in-  
“ dependence, his master had been induced, &c.”—But could any thing, Sir, be more *false* and *insulting*?

Have we not above thirty thousand as fine troops as any in the world now in that very country? And are not two of their principal sea-ports now in our possession?— The noble duke says, “ if we attack France, America is “ in honour bound to assist her.” But is there a man, his Grace excepted, who can believe that *honour*, or even *honesty*, has any influence over the revolted Americans? And supposing that either or both of them had, surely none will have the effrontery to say, that France is best entitled to their good offices. I am amazed, Sir, at the encomiums which you have thought proper to bestow on our rebellious subjects. As a man, and as a Briton, I think it my duty, not only to abhor their conduct, but also to challenge you, and all their advocates, to produce another instance of such general ingratitude and villainy.

We are told that the noble duke, when exclaiming against the injudicious appointment of the commissioners, said, “ to settle the dispute and accommodate “ the unhappy differences now subsisting between this “ country and America, was one of the most important “ purposes that ever was attempted by parliament.” And yet when peace, “ at any rate,” was his principal object, he could say, “ if it appeared that America “ would prefer a treaty and connection with France, “ he would even say *be it so*, and end the war.” Here, Sir, if I mistake not, his Grace treats the unhappy differences as a matter of very little importance. But supposing that all our other subjects on the continent, with those in the West Indies, and even in Ireland, were to prefer a treaty and connection with France; ought we to say, *be it so*, because his Grace hath thought proper to ask, “ whence the ships, the soldiers, and the seamen, “ necessary for so perilous an undertaking as a war with “ the House of Bourbon?” Surely, Sir, that Briton capable of hearing such language without emotion, can have

have but little regard for his king and his country: Shall Great Britain, after having long sat as queen among the surrounding nations, meanly bend to the work of her own hands? Shall the unnatural conduct of our degenerate and viperous offspring, joined with the kindred ambition and perfidy of our natural enemies, precipitate us from that exalted sphere in which, for a long series of years, we have shone with unequalled splendour? May every loyal Briton forbid it; may our illustrious sovereign forbid it; and, above all, may our infinitely great and ineffably gracious *God* forbid it.

We are told that the noble duke, with some of his half-partizans, insisted, that we have no fleet, no army, no resources. But, in direct opposition to them all, I positively insist, that we have fleets; that we have armies; and that we have resources. Britain, I believe, never had such a fleet, at the commencement of any war, as that which is now ready to chastise the insolence of France, should she attempt to protect her trade with our American colonies. With respect to the army, it was but the other day that the same men declared themselves to be greatly alarmed at the number of troops which loyal Britons were then raising, by the king's permission, in different parts of the kingdom: and they loudly complained that the constitution was *imminently endangered*, by such illegal assistance. For my own part, I solemnly declare, that it is absolutely out of my power to entertain a good opinion of those men, who, by endeavouring to tie up the hands of the parent constitutionally, would afford an opportunity to her unnatural children for stabbing her to the heart effectually.—Well might the earl of Chatham exclaim, “ where is the ancient spirit of the nation? And the earl of Shelburne ask, “ What will the noble duke *strip* us of next? ” However these noblemen may have formerly been actuated by party-

prejudice, a thirst for popularity, or self-interest; I cannot avoid believing that they now feel for the dishonour and injury of their country. As this must afford a pleasing reflection to every loyal Briton, I sincerely wish that I could say as much *in favour* of the duke of Richmond.

We are told that his grace said, " Government was " flattered, assisted, and supported by Jacobites, Tories, " and Highlanders. That it was an ill omen to the " business. And that he was sorry to see party-spirit so " early break forth." If the news-papers have given us a fair representation of his grace's speeches in parliament, he ought to have been the last man in the kingdom to complain of the early breaking forth of party-spirit. Can we hear of administration's being threatened with *insurrections* of the people, and a noble lord with being *dragged* from his place, *murdered*, and even *torn limb from limb*, as the Dutch did the De Witts, without concluding the speaker to have been actuated by a most violent and dangerous party-spirit? We are told that lord Shelburne likewise said, " that " no one of the present ministry was equal to De Witt " in abilities, however they might all *richly deserve his* " *fate.*"—Is this parliamentary language, or can it be deemed consistent with the honour of that august house, in which it is said to have been delivered? That laudable zeal which lately incited many of our fellow-subjects to assist and support the British government, in their just endeavours to suppress the present very daring rebellion, his grace hath thought proper to brand with the epithet of party-spirit; and he declared himself sorry to see it so soon break forth. But I hope that noble spirit of true patriotism will continue to increase throughout the British empire, though his grace, with all the anti-government party, should be thereby overwhelmed with *sorrow.*

What

What but a malignant party-spirit could induce his grace to represent those who now assist and support government, as persons inimical to the state? "They are " (says he) Jacobites, Tories, and Highlanders." I hope, Sir, there are very few Protestant Jacobites now in the kingdom; but supposing that there are some of that denomination among the subscribers, it will reflect such real honour upon them as I dare venture to say his grace never intended. It will shew, that however the prejudices of youth and education may incline them to act against their lawful sovereign in favour of a Popish pretender, when any competition arises between them; they will, nevertheless, cheerfully assist and support their sovereign against the enemies of the state.—Pray, Sir, can as much be said in favour of the American rebels and their advocates here?—If, by Tories, his grace means such as are always in favour of government, without adverting to the justice or propriety of its measures, I hope there are none amongst the gentlemen in question, who wish to act so irrational a part.

Again, what but a baneful party-spirit could urge the duke to represent the Highlanders as unfriendly to Britain; Has he forgot the services which that warlike people rendered their country in the course of the last war? None I believe can say, that one man, among the thousands then employed against the enemies of their country, ever gave the least cause to suspect either his courage or his loyalty. But is there a man who, agreeable to truth, can say so much for those who have lately opposed government in the houses of parliament? The allied army in Germany was often witness to the martial deeds of the Highlanders. At Ticonderago, our unfortunate troops beheld their ardour, their wounds and their death, with admiration and sorrow. The well fought battles of Quebec and the plains of Abraham do them infinite

honour ; and the account of our reduction of Guadaloupe will transmit their military fame to succeeding generations. But, to have done with such national distinctions as tend to divide those who ought always to be united, they fought, they bled, and they conquered as Britons.

His grace, in order to avoid a rupture with France, advised to withdraw our armies from America, to acknowledge her independence, and to court her alliance. He declared, that this country had still many friends in America, who, upon our taking such a measure, would be furnished with a strong argument in our favour.—Is this language, Sir, suitable to the dignity of a British peer ? Is it consistent with justice, and agreeable to truth ? Or can it have the least tendency to promote the honour and interest of the British empire ? Many of our friends among the Americans have already been treated with the most shameful injustice and shocking cruelty, by that very government which you have audaciously called just and virtuous ! And can we suppose that the withdrawing of our troops, and declaring the independency of the tyrants, would furnish our persecuted friends with a strong argument in our favour ! Shame on such false reasoning, and detested be the arrogance of that man, who thus insults the understanding of his peers. But, supposing it necessary to withdraw our forces from America, why should we declare them independent, and court their alliance ? Upon the repeal of the stamp-act, our *illustrious patriots* thought it necessary to assert our right of legislative authority over the colonies, by a declaratory law made for that purpose, although they did not then think it prudent to exercise it. But the duke, for reasons best known to himself, now adviseth to give up every shadow of our right, by declaring them independent. In replying to the earl of Shelburne,

burne, his grace said, “ he wished as earnestly as the “ noble lord for an accommodation between Great Bri- “ tain and America, without our making so great a sa- “ crifice as the dependency of the latter.” And yet, by giving it afterward as his opinion, “ that the part of “ Asia where we carried on our commerce, ought to be “ as independent of this country as America,” he clearly intimated, that, in his opinion, America ought to be independent. But we carry on commerce with our West-India islands, with our yet loyal colonies on the Ameri- can continent, and with Ireland ; and ought they all, for that reason, to be independent of Great Britain ? The moment we declare the Americans independent, they will entertain hopes of making Britain dependent on America. But why should we court their alliance ? What advantage could Great Britain reasonably expect from an alliance with independent America ? Has their past conduct been so strongly marked with *gratitude, honour, and honesty*, as to produce a rational confidence in their future behaviour ? And could we expect to have the preference in any article of their trade, unless it should appear to coincide with their own interest ? To acknowledge the independence, and court the alliance of America, would, in my opinion, be folly and madness in the extreme.

Perhaps his grace sees that America cannot yet stand upon her own bottom, and therefore he wishes to engage Great Britain to support her as an ally. The Americans, by their late treaty, either intend to establish a real commercial connection with France ; or, by only enter- ing on that unnatural scheme, they mean to oblige their parent state to agree to such terms as they may think fit to dictate. In the one case, their intention must be, to make Britain shrink back within such limits as they shall prescribe ; and, in the other, that she should defend the

*infidious, ingrateful, faithless, and unprincipled Americans,* against the future attacks of France. As, in either case, the elevation of America, on the ruin of Britain, seems to be their object, Britons ought to be unanimous in their vigorous endeavours to frustrate such a base design. Shall Great Britain, after her expensive preparations by sea and land, submit to the ruinous schemes of her natural and unnatural enemies, without so much as attempting to strike a single blow? Or shall the American rebels, by threatening us with the hostile interposition of France, enervate the British arm, dismay her warlike sons, and shamefully tarnish the honour of that kingdom, which hath long been accustomed to victory and triumph? No, my fellow citizens! let us pursue a nobler conduct. Let us view the rewards now offered, for those great sacrifices lately made on the behalf of our revolted colonies, with astonishment and abhorrence! Trusting to the goodness of our cause, with humble dependence on the divine aid, may we, on this trying occasion, manifest a proper regard for the future welfare of our country; and, incapable of ignobly yielding whilst we can fight, may we evince our resolution, either to conquer as Britons, or to fall like men.

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

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## L E T T E R XIX.

Reverend Sir,

MY last letter contained remarks on the duke of Richmond's speeches, as they appeared in the newspapers; and in this I shall take some notice of those of Lord Shelburne.

We are told that the earl of Shelburne said, " the blunders and inactivity of the ministry seemed to threaten the ruin of the empire. A *predicament* in which he saw clearly they would rather see Great Britain involved, than part with their beloved places." This, Sir, appears to be worthy of the most serious attention. The *pretended* blunders and incapacity of administration have been loudly and incessantly trumpeted by our deluding patriots, in order to justify that conduct, which seems to threaten the *ruin* of the British empire. A *predicament* in which some of them would rather see their country involved, than fall short of those lucrative places which the ministry enjoy. Some of them appear now, indeed, to be alarmed at the effects of their opposition ; and, though much enraged with disappointment, they have made some very salutary alterations in the plan of their conduct.

In order to prove the criminality of the ministry, his lordship, we are told, asked lord Weymouth, " if America was not lost, and a war with France impending ? " Were not these established facts ? And were they not sufficient proofs of the incapacity of administration ? " In answer to this, Sir, I beg leave to say, they are far from being established facts ; and if they were, the conclusion which his lordship hath drawn from the premises is clearly unnatural and forced. That a war with France is now impending, I freely admit ; but surely his lordship can never believe that America is lost, whilst we have " as fine an army as ever was seen" maintaining their quiet possession of Philadelphia. In my opinion it is absurd to say that America is lost, whilst two of its principal sea-ports are fully possessed by those troops which his lordship said might lately have conquered one of the provinces of France ! But supposing America to be irrecoverably lost, and a war with France actually begun ;

begun ; will they indubitably prove the incapacity of administration ? The ministry have certainly been endeavouring, not only to reduce the revolted colonies to due obedience, but also to overawe the ambitious houses of Bourbon ; whilst our false patriots have been using their utmost efforts to counteract them. I am sorry to say, the encouragement given to the American rebellion has been great, and the methods used, to divide and distress us at home, many ; whilst our natural enemies have been repeatedly invited to take the advantage of our distracted situation. In short, Sir, some in opposition have behaved in such a manner, as to become injurers of their country, and enemies to government.

His lordship, we are told, declared, that he trembled for the Bank of England ; that at night when he went to bed, and in the morning when he got up, the Bank was uppermost in his thoughts ; and that, from several conversations held with you, he was convinced that administration should do every thing in their power to support the Bank. If, Sir, as you have said, “ A suspicion “ raised, or a *panic* struck, would destroy all private and “ public credit, dissolve the whole frame of our govern-“ ment, and reduce us to a state of nature ;” surely we cannot think the house of lords the most proper place for the declaration of his lordship’s solicitude and his trembling. But why does his lordship advise administration to do every thing in their power to support the Bank ; and immediately afterward endeavour to dissuade all the monied men in the kingdom from supporting the ministry ? “ The monied men very wisely (said his lordship) “ put no confidence in the present ministry ; “ they would not lend them their money. No honest “ man would, and whoever did, not only did a foolish “ thing, but actually did their country a disservice. Let “ the present set of blundering ministers resign, and let “ honest

“ honest and able men fill their places.” Was a certain noble duke to reply to this, he would probably say, that his lordship had “ let the cat out of the bag.” Every man, who has a real regard for his king and his country, will certainly wish administration to be composed of *honest* and *able* men. But is it possible, Sir, to believe, that *honest* and *able* men will attempt to force the ministry out of their places, by such means as have a direct tendency to ruin their country ? If the ministry must resign their places, on account of their miscarriages, surely those men who have been the principal cause of such miscarriages, ought not to be admitted in their stead. To reward vice will infallibly encrease it : and men destitute of principle, will ever be ready to sacrifice the interest of their country to their own avarice and ambition. Had not the first American riots and rebellion been rewarded with the repeal of the stamp-act, it is more than probable that they would not have so soon recurred to the same means. Children who obtain things by crying for them, soon learn to know the price of every thing they want to enjoy : and those parents who are weak enough to make such a rod for their own backs, ought, in a great measure, to thank themselves for the pernicious consequences.

His lordship, we are told, advised administration “ to seek for men among the Whigs, to write to the country gentlemen of weight and character in the various counties of the kingdom : state to them the situation of public affairs, demand their assistance, and, where it was necessary, offer those honours and advantages which were in their power to bestow.” This, Sir, is such strange advice, that I can hardly think his lordship could be serious in giving it. If a Whig be one who always opposes government, surely the advising administration to employ such, must be deemed extremely absurd.

furd. For instance, Sir, I should think Bedlam, or a worse place, the fittest abode for that minister, who should attempt to employ you, in order to favour the purposes of government. But why is the offer of honours and advantages coupled with the demand of their assistance ? It is the indispensable duty of every man, as a member of the state, to promote the interest of his country : and, on this very principle, our present patriots complain loudly of ministerial corruption and bribery. Can the gentlemen in opposition approve of that conduct in their own party, which they condemn in others ? And can a Whig be properly called by that name, whilst he acts for government in consequence of honours and advantages received from the ministry ? I should be sorry to judge uncharitably of any man, but I cannot avoid thinking, that had the ministry previously employed men in the manner which his lordship recommended, he would probably have been among the first to have arraigned their conduct.

His lordship declared, " that government could never " thrive, unless the state scribblers (such as the querist " employed to write down the Howes, and destroy those " very arguments which he himself had, perhaps, but a " little before used) were silenced." One would think, Sir, that there cannot be any great necessity for silencing such authors as destroy their own arguments, unless the silencer wish to preserve their first positions from being destroyed.

We are told that the Hon. Mr. Fox said, " the minister, by not bringing the defamers of the Howes to " justice, gave reason to think that he approved of it." But it is well known that the minister hath never attempted to bring those who have defamed himself to justice ; and will it therefore follow, that he approves of the defamation ? This, Sir, appears to be a strange kind

of logic, and few, I presume, will think the conclusion justly deducible from the premises. But why should the minister bring the defamers of the Howes to justice? The law is surely as open to those gentlemen in opposition, whose favourites the defamed seem to be, as it is to the minister. Whatever attempts are made by the minister to restrain that which is deemed the liberty, although in fact it may be the licentiousness, of the press, have a tendency to render him unpopular; and the gentlemen in opposition generally avail themselves of such circumstances. In short, Sir, a desire to criminate the ministry, for the sake of their places, appears but too obvious in the conduct of the leaders in opposition.

I lament, with the duke of Richmond, " that men " should be found, who, for the profits of a paltry " place, would support administration in every measure, " whether wise and prudent, or weak and wicked." And I beg leave to call upon his grace to lament likewise with me, that men should be found, who, in order to obtain the profits of a paltry place, if not from worse motives, oppose administration in every measure, right as well as wrong. In order to shew briefly, the justness of the present war on the part of Great Britain, the base behaviour of opposition, and the ruinous consequences which naturally flow from their conduct; I shall conclude with the following passage from the elegant Junius. He says (alluding to the stamp-act) that " Mr. Grenville " thought it equitable that those parts of the empire, " which had benefitted most by the expences of the war, " should contribute something to the expences of the " peace; and he had no doubt of the constitutional right " vested in parliament to raise the contribution. But, " unfortunately for this country, Mr. Grenville was at " any rate to be distressed, because he was minister, and " Mr. P—t and lord C——n were to be patrons of

America,

“ America, because they were in opposition. Their declaration gave spirit and argument to the colonies, and while perhaps they meant no more than a ruin of a minister, they in effect divided one half of the empire from the other.”

I am, Reverend Sir, your's, &c.

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L E T T E R XX.

Reverend Sir,

ONCE more crave your attention to some further remarks on the published debates, with a few serious reflections on that political doctrine which you, and several of your brethren have ventured to inculcate.

The gentlemen in opposition seem to have gone very unwarrantable lengths in their attempts to criminate the ministry. In the beginning of the session before the last, the minority declared that the intention of the houses of Bourbon was certainly hostile, and they insisted that our navy was in such a weak and unprepared state, that it would be utterly impossible to equip a fleet capable of coping with those of our enemies, by the time they would be ready to put to sea. In answer to this, administration, particularly lord Sandwich, assured them, that, ere the fleets of our enemies could put to sea, we should have one in readiness superior to them both. But mark, Sir, the astonishing conduct of our patriots! No sooner had several ships of war been commissioned, an impress begun in order to man them, and an estimate of 45,000 men for the sea-service brought into the house of commons, than they exclaimed, “ Why all this pressing? Why so

“ many

" many men wanted for the navy? It looks as though we  
 " were on the eve of a war!" Can any thing, Sir, be  
 more glaring than the determination of these men to find  
 fault with the ministry in every thing they do? First to  
 tempt and then torment, is as like the prince of darkness  
 as though spit out of his very mouth. At any rate  
 the ministry are to be blamed, and the American rebel-  
 lion encouraged.

The leaders in opposition, after a series of the most  
 vigorous efforts to stop the wheels of government, and  
 after having strained every nerve in counteracting the  
 measures of administration, have even accused them with  
 those very delays, miscarriages, and dangers which they  
 themselves had occasioned! The duke of Richmond is  
 said to have called " the language of the congress de-  
 " claration, the language of administration, who had  
 " forced them to change their mild and dutiful style." But is it possible, Sir, for any *man* to believe the assertion? Whoever will take the pains to compare the inflammatory speeches of the minority, antecedently published, will soon be convinced that the American congress drew their rebellious materials from that baneful source. When we are told that a celebrated orator in the house of commons, after insisting on the necessity of our immediately acknowledging the independence of America, accused the ministry of having brought us into such a disgraceful and dangerous situation; we may reasonably conclude, that the eloquent member lay under some temptation to encrease that disgrace and danger, provided it could be charged to the account of administration. For my part, I am clearly of opinion, that the American rebellion not only originated among ourselves, but has owed its continuance and progress to the unnatural aid and encouragement received from hence. Mistaken notions of self-interest may have tempted the Ameri-

Americans to resist the just authority of their parent-state; but to find Britons speaking and acting in favour of that rebellion is truly amazing!

Several of the minority objected to the late bill, empowering the king to appoint commissioners to treat with the Americans, because, said they, "the obvious tendency which it has to divide the Americans will certainly induce them to reject our overtures." These gentlemen, if I be not mistaken, have paid the Americans an ill-judged compliment. Shall we be told, that the Americans will cautiously avoid every thing which hath a tendency to divide them: and yet those very men, who tell us so, constantly endeavour to divide the British state! Is unanimity less necessary or less laudable in Britons, than in the American rebels? Where is the man so regardless of truth as to answer in the affirmative? That our modern patriots pretend to be extremely watchful over the interest of their country, I freely admit: but alas, for that astonishing manner in which they have proceeded!

Upon this principle the inquiry into the state of the nation was said to be set on foot. But how was it conducted? And what was the result? By calling for a vast number of papers, and requiring administration to defend a variety of their measures, the leading inquirers seem to have intended to perplex and plague the ministry in such a manner, as not only to prevent a vigorous prosecution of the American war, but also to force them to a speedy resignation of those places for which they had long contended.—We are told that the duke of Richmond said, "the inquiry had roused the people to a sense of their situation, and obliged ministers to change the ruinous course they were pursuing." That the members of both houses have a right to freedom of debate within their own walls, I entertain not a doubt:

but

but some of their attempts to rouse the people, I conceive to be unparliamentary and dangerous. However that may be, I hope his grace does not imagine that the thanks voted him by the anti-government party, in Newcastle upon Tyne, affords any proof of the sense of the people at large. It has appeared, that we have sustained losses in trade, in shipping, in soldiers, in seamen, and in money; but are not such losses inseparably connected with a state of war? And have not the revolted colonies felt them more severely than us? The ministry have indeed made some change in their proceedings; but as wicked Haman the Agagite said: "All this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." The ministry must resign their places; nothing short of this will satisfy their ambitious opponents. We are told that his grace said: "it was unmanly in the ministry to keep their places, when the pressing necessity of making peace, required the execution of plans diametrically opposite to every thing they had said, and every thing they had done for a series of years." Here is a manifest deviation from the ostensive principle of opposition. His grace hath declared himself clearly and expressly against men, not against measures: this, Sir, however disagreeable the discovery may be to several of the anti-government party, serves to evince the ruling motive of their leaders.

Minority, after having repeatedly declared their wish that America might never be conquered, pretended to feel for the injured honour of their country in general Burgoyne's surrender; and they denounced vengeance on those whom they were pleased to point out as having been the cause of his miscarriage. Although I do not approve of the late inquiries, because I believe they had a strong tendency to injure the nation; yet I think it highly necessary that an inquiry should be made into the

conduct of some men, provided that it be set on foot at a proper time, when all, who are principally concerned, can attend to defend themselves. The *blood*, the *treasure*, and the *commerce* of the British empire are too valuable and interesting to be trifled with.

The leaders in opposition have, on some particular occasions, called on the country members to consider the high rate of the land-tax. But whether with an intention to divide the ministerial party, to deter administration from making any addition to that branch of the revenue, or to make the public believe that landed property is already so much burdened, that provision must be made for the additional supplies, by laying taxes upon some orther articles, I shall not venture to determine. However that may be, I look on their conduct as highly reprehensible. It is well known that land is not taxed according to its present value; and, as the difference between the real value and that which is taxed is various, each proprietor must be the best judge how far his property is burdened. I am credibly informed, that in some parts of Northumberland, where the value of land has greatly increased since the Union, the present tax amounts only to three-pence in the pound; which is no more than one sixteenth of that which should be paid according to the statute. In justice to the public, every estate ought to be rated at its real value. The complaint of partiality would thereby be obviated, and our patriots prevented from imposing on the public by their false representations.

I presume that such taxes as are least oppressive to the people, and, at the same time, most effectual for the support of government, ought to be preferred. Mr. Gilbert's motion for taxing all public salaries and clear perquisites of office, amounting to two hundred pounds a year and upwards, one fourth of their value, was truly

truly patriotic; and I am really sorry that it miscarried. When I consider that it was intended to reduce, during the present war, the value of those offices for which the minority leaders had been long striving; I cannot be anywise surprised at the opposition which it met with from that quarter. Nor can I wonder that lord North should be found on the same side; for, although I think the servants of the crown ought to stand first in contributing to the exigencies of the state, I should have but a poor opinion of that general, who, in the face of the enemy, would attempt to reduce the pay of his troops.

The eagerness of the minority leaders to censure the conduct of administration, has frequently betrayed them into the most glaring inconsistencies. One day a noble lord accuses thousands of his majesty's most loyal subjects of having acted contrary to the constitution; and, on a subsequent day, declares the constitution itself to be doubtful, by his proposing the settling of it as a matter so essentially necessary, that it ought to be set about previous to any other business.—A noble duke, when he wanted our ships of war to leave the American coast, was pleased to call the frigates the *force* of our navy, and recommended their being ordered home in order to guard us against an invasion: but when the ministry were to be blamed for suffering the French fleet to pass the straits of Gibraltar, our whole naval force in America became instantly so weak as to be deemed unable to cope with the Toulon squadron, consisting only of twelve or thirteen ships of the line and a few frigates. On this I shall just observe, that the latter may be true, the former is ridiculous. And, as modern patriotism and reason seldom agree with each other, I should not be surprised to hear the city militia recommended as the fittest troops for repelling an invasion.—At one time the ministry is condemned for resolving to go to war with France,

on account of their late treaty with our rebellious subjects: and at another it is insisted, that they are highly culpable for suffering the Toulon fleet to come out of the Mediterranean sea.—Can the duke of Richmond prove that the French have a just right to trade with our revolted colonies, but not to the use of the western ocean through which they must unavoidably pass? Or, can he inform us how administration could hinder the progress of the French fleet, without an actual commencement of hostilities? Although it be granted, that “ the fortress “ of Gibraltar is not kept merely as an insult to the “ Spaniards; nor Minorca solely regarded as an orna-“ ment to the British crown;” will it therefore follow, that we have a just right to shut and to open the passage of the Straits as we think fit? Administration, by holding those places of honour and emolument which the minority-leaders want to enjoy, are sure to meet with opposition from that quarter, in almost every great national concern. If the minister speaks of peace, they are for war: and, if he declares for war, they insist on the necessity of preserving peace! If preparations for hostilities by sea and land are not vigorously carried on, the heads of the ministry are said to be justly forfeited by their supineness: and, if their preparations are spirited, they are immediately branded with extravagance, injustice and cruelty! If administration make any demands on our American brethren, they are deemed tyrannical: and, if they hold out any offers, they are said to be insidious! If, when judged necessary, our demands at foreign courts are spirited, they are called insolent: and, if otherwise made, those who are immediately concerned are sure to be charged with incapacity, pusillanimity, and treachery.

These, my fellow Britons, are your present patriots; and such has been the conduct of those who arrogantly claim your approbation and applause! If you esteem the

con-

consistency and candour of your worthy ancestors, you will lament the astonishing degeneracy of the present patriots.—If you have a real regard for your country, you must abhor their destructive conduct: and if you wish to promote the welfare of your posterity, you will assiduously endeavour to defeat their pernicious designs. For my part, I solemnly declare, that I can as easily conceive Satan to be the great friend of mankind; as I can believe that the present leaders in opposition are endeavouring to advance the interest of their country. May we speedily turn from those sins which have provoked the Almighty to send such a grievous scourge amongst us; and may we earnestly join in beseeching the Father of all our mercies to put his hook in their nose and his bridle in their lips, and turn them back as he did the raging Assyrians of old, when they magnified themselves against that Almighty hand which used them as a rod, in order to reclaim his chosen Israel.

The pains you have taken to disseminate your poisonous doctrine renders you highly reprehensible; and your not having publickly relinquished those principles, which your silence proves you incapable of defending, may justly be deemed a considerable addition to your offence. If you really believe your conduct to have been right, the refutation of your opponents is a duty which you owe to yourself and the cause in which you have engaged: if, on the contrary, you are convinced that you have been wrong, your duty to *God* and your country calls for your publick and immediate confession. As a Briton, I love my country; and, as a member of the community, I wish to aid and assist its government. Fully convinced that the friends of Britain are my friends, and that her enemies ought always to be considered as enemies to me, I think it my duty to oppose all the abettors of the present rebellion. Wherever I go I offer to maintain the

legislative right of Britain over her colonies, against as many as chuse to assemble on the opposite side: and, influenced by these motives, I again declare my readiness to meet you, and such of your friends as you may think proper to convene, on the subject. Trusting to the goodness of my country's cause, I pay no regard to disparity in number: if I prevail in the debate, I shall be more established in my opinion; and, if vanquished, I shall have an opportunity of giving up such sentiments as, upon trial, I find to be erroneous.

Before I take my leave of this disagreeable subject, allow me to ask, how can you answer to God and your conscience for that astonishing part which you have acted therein? You acknowledged that the Conciliatory Bill, which passed in the beginning of the year 1775, suspended the operation of all the acts complained of by the colonies, so long as they continued to raise such sums of money as the legislature of Great Britain should name. You owned that our legislature, in allowing the Americans to tax themselves, reserved only the right of fixing the *quantum* to be raised. You likewise admitted, that the sword was not then drawn; that hostilities had not commenced: and you applauded the Americans for treating our conciliatory proposal with indignation, and rejecting it with contempt! Had the Americans intended to behave as became subjects of the British crown, they would not have spurned at such an equitable proposal. Had they wished to bear any part of these burdens with which their parent-state, by nourishing and defending them, became unavoidably pressed; they would have made some specific offers. If the latitude for taxing, reserved by the British legislature, had been their only reason for refusing to comply; they would surely have proposed some mode for fixing its limits. Although all that they formerly contended for appears

to have been granted by the bill, yet the self-interest, pride and ambition of some men on the other side the Atlantic, buoyed up and encouraged by the factious conduct of their demagogues here, have hurried the colonies into a most daring, dangerous, and bloody rebellion.

As a Briton, I sincerely lament the unjustifiable part which some of those in opposition have acted; and, as a protestant dissenter, it pains me to think on your unchristian conduct. Your publications on Civil Liberty are directly repugnant to the spirit of Christianity; and they have been productive of much mischief on both sides the Atlantic. Instead of endeavouring to pull down the pillars of the state; you should have copied after your divine master, who, during his ministry on earth, went about *doing good*. In the room of joining those who are ruining their country for the sake of obtaining the high offices in administration; you ought to have assisted the government in their endeavours to promote the general welfare of the empire. And, instead of planting your sovereign's pillow with thorns, by publishing your licentious Scheme of Civil Liberty; you should have endeavoured to alleviate his weighty cares, by restraining vice, discouraging luxury, and exhorting all your fellow-subjects to "fear God and honour the king."

The word of God commands us to yield obedience to civil rulers; but in direct opposition to that sacred authority, you have endeavoured to excite the peaceful subjects in every kingdom to disloyalty and rebellion. When it is considered that "every battle of the warrior" "is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood;" every humane heart must wish to promote peace among men. Clergymen, by the great influence which they generally have over the laity, especially their own hearers, have it much in their power to advance, or to lessen the

authority of government; and, consequently, of forwarding, or impeding its designs. I am afraid, Sir, that you, and several of your clerical brethren, have much to answer for on this head. "The justice of the nation has slept over your enormities: but can you expect that the justice of heaven will sleep?" When the *Lord* shall arise to make inquisition for *blood*, you, and your brethren in sedition, may tremble at the dread account! Before that Omniscient and impartial Judge, you will stand stript of all those tinsel coverings which serve to deceive your fellow-mortals. Then will your learned declamation be like the broken bubble, and all your loud-tongued patriotism vanish like the dissolving smoke.

I think I am warranted in saying, that the British constitution is justly esteemed the best in the world: that our present government is, without exception, the mildest on earth: and that the virtues which adorn our illustrious sovereign, as a man, as a husband, as a father, and as a king, constitute one of the most amiable characters of the age. Under circumstances so peculiarly favourable, the factious subject, and the real Christian, are characters absolutely irreconcileable. I am sensible that many, who profess godliness, abet the cause of rebellion, "despise government, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities;" but I cannot believe that the truly pious Christian dare *indulge* himself in any such conduct. That minister who calls on his audience to join with him in praying, "that the iron hand of oppression, which is gone forth, may be stayed;" entertains but a poor opinion of them as Britons and as Christians. Such an enemy to legal government I once heard; but I durst not join with him in the petition. May it no longer be said that "the leaders of this people causeth them to err." May the precepts and examples

of our *Lord* and his apostles be seriously considered; and may the conduct of Christians be regulated by that unerring standard. Blessed be *God*, we have many dissenting ministers, who think it their indispensable duty to enforce the legal authority of that government, which secures the peaceable enjoyment of all their civil and religious privileges. I have, in several places, had the pleasure of hearing ministers pray, “ that the Almighty would “ grant such success to the British arms, as might be “ conducive to a speedy and permanent peace; and that “ all the horrid calamities of war might happily cease.” This language, Sir, is clearly expressive of the humane man, the loyal subject, and the pious Christian. With such I heartily join.—May legal government be more highly valued, and Britons unanimous in its support. May Albion’s king be always the *father* of his people, and their happiness his delight. May wisdom and integrity distinguish his counsellors, and courage, tempered with humanity, mark the conduct of his troops. May the British arms be ever victorious; and may the revolted colonies soon become duly obedient. May their principal deluders meet with such punishment as the public safety renders necessary; and may civil discord be no more heard in our land. May every part of the British dominions enjoy the blessings of a permanent peace: may vital religion always distinguish us as a Christian people: and may we continue the favourites of heaven, till empire on earth shall be no more.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble servant,

JOHN STEVENSON.

L E T T E R S  
ADDRESSED TO THE  
M E M B E R S  
O F T H E  
H O U S E O F C O M M O N S,

o n

The Slavery of the Colliers, Coal-bearers,  
and Salters in Scotland.

L E T T E R I.

Gentlemen,

IT is with the utmost pleasure I observe, that a bill is soon to be brought in to alter, explain, and amend several acts of the parliament of Scotland, respecting *colliers*, *coal-bearers*, and *salters*; and when I reflect upon that zeal for *liberty*, which hath, on many occasions, shone conspicuously in St. Stephen's chapel, I cannot entertain the least doubt of your readiness to emancipate so many of our fellow-subjects from their long, scandalous, unconstitutional, and cruel slavery. *Slavery!* O hateful name! may it be speedily and totally annihilated throughout this happy isle. Shall a free-born Briton, the favourite of heaven and envy of the world, lose for ever his much-loved and invaluable liberty, by entering to work in a Scotch colliery? Forbid it, and from henceforth prevent it, O ye guardians of our inestimable privileges!

I trust that the odious epithet of *slave*, when applied to a native of Great Britain, will always grate upon the ear of every member of your assembly. But in Scotland,

all

all colliers, coal-bearers, and salters have, for almost one hundred and seventy years, been held, reputed and treated as *slaves*; and yet, amazing to think, this is the first effort that hath ever been made to manumit them! I am willing to suppose that the English members have, in general, been ignorant of such *bondage*; but amongst the many *forty-fives* which, since the Union, have represented Scotland, I presume that scarcely an ignorant person can be named. I am far from taking any pleasure in accusing my countrymen and fellow-subjects, but facts are stubborn things; against them, even the eloquence of a Cicero must fail; and mere professions of liberal and humane principles, however pompous, are unsubstantial proofs.

In this highly favoured country, liberty is our darling privilege; and every attempt to destroy or abridge it, quickly alarms each tenacious possessor. Arbitrary measures are no sooner used, even against an individual, but every breast is fired with resentment; and the hated despot, like the drunkards in ancient Sparta, is instantly held up as a monster, for the rising generation to gaze on with abhorrence. How must every Englishman stand amazed at hearing, that, ever since the year 1606, several hundreds of the free-born inhabitants of this island have been held in real slavery; without having committed any other act of *delinquency* than that of endeavouring to maintain themselves and their families, by working coals and making of salt, for the comfortable accommodation of their hard-hearted and unfeeling neighbours! I hope that the gentlemen, whose humane feelings have incited them to move for this bill, mean to procure the *total abolition* of so disgraceful a *bondage*; but the words “*alter, explain, and amend*,” imply a partial remedy only; and when I reflect on the shameful practice of their courts, and consider that some, who are now high

in the law department, may think themselves materially affected by any reduction of that power which they have so long exercised over the bodies of their miserable *slaves*, they powerfully excite some very disagreeable forebodings. In England, they enter into articles of agreement with their masters for a certain time; and I humbly presume that no reasonable objection can operate against a similar practice in Scotland. I cannot conceive why any law should be made to affect the colliers and salters in Scotland, any more than those in England; especially as their number and importance in the former, bear but a very small proportion to that of the latter. The privilege of parties to judge for themselves, antecedent to their executing of any covenant or agreement, flows from an inherent and constitutional right; and as the law of Scotland, as well as that of England, obliges every person who hath voluntarily and deliberately bound himself, to the true and full performance of every clause in the contract; I hope you will now restore a set of peaceable, laborious and useful people, to the society of their fellow-subjects; by repealing *speedily, totally and absolutely*, every statute now in force against them.

In my next, I intend to present you with a transcript of the several acts respecting *colliers, coal-bearers and salters*, in Scotland, together with some cursory remarks.

I remain, most respectfully,

Gentlemen,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

A FRIEND to TRUE LIBERTY.

LETTER

## LETTER II.

Gentlemen,

I ADDRESSED you lately in behalf of the poor oppressed *colliers*, *coal-bearers*, and *salters* in Scotland; and, encouraged by a firm persuasion of your readiness to redress all such grievances as appear to be real and momentous, I shall now offer for your perusal a transcript of those acts which have, in some measure, driven them from the society of other men; and forced them to herd by themselves, as if they were a set of beings essentially different from their fellow-subjects.

In the reign of James the First of England, in the year 1606, it was no less imprudently than cruelly enacted as follow, viz.

“ Our sovereign lord and estates of this present parliament statutes and ordains, that no person within this realm hereafter shall hire or conduce any *salters*, *colliers* or *coal-bearers*, without sufficient testimonial of their master whom they last served, subscribed with his hand, or at least sufficient attestation of a reasonable cause of their removing, made in the presence of ane (one) baillie, or ane magistrate of the part where they came fra (from), and in case they receive, fee, hire, supply, or entertain any of the said *colliers*, *salters*, or *coal-bearers*, without sufficient testimonial from the masters whom they left, challenging their servants within year and day, that the party by whom they are challenged, shall deliver them back again within twenty-four hours, under the pain of one hundred pounds \*, to be paid to the persons whom fra they

\* Eight pounds six shillings and eight-pence sterling.

“ passed,

“ passed, and that for ilk, and ilk (each) time that they  
 “ or any of them, shall happen to be challenged, and  
 “ not delivered, as said is. And the said *colliers*, *coal-*  
 “ *bearers*, and *salters*, to be esteemed, reput, and holden  
 “ as *thieves*, and *punished in their bodies*, viz. Sa many  
 “ of them as shall receive fore-wages and fees. And  
 “ the said estates of this present parliament give power  
 “ and commission to all masters and owners of coal-  
 “ heughs and salt-pans to apprehend all vagabonds and  
 “ *sturdie beggars to be put to labour.*”

Because watermen, windsmen, and gatesmen were necessary persons in collieries, and not included in the preceding statute, the following act passed in the first parliament of king Charles the second, in the year 1661, viz.

“ Our sovereign lord, with the advice and consent of  
 “ his estates of parliament, ratifies the eleventh act of  
 “ the eighteenth parliament of king James the sixt<sup>h</sup>, of  
 “ worthy memory, made anent (concerning) *coal-bearers*  
 “ and *salters*, with this addition, that because watermen,  
 “ who laves and draws water in the coal-heugh-head, and  
 “ gatesmen, who work the ways and passages in the said  
 “ heughs, are as necessary to the owners and masters  
 “ of the said coal-heughs, as the colliers and bearers—  
 “ It is therefore statuted and ordained by our sovereign  
 “ lord, with advice and consent aforesaid, that no person  
 “ shall hire or seduce any waterman, windsmen, or  
 “ gatesman, without a testimonial of the master whom  
 “ they served, under the pains contained in the former  
 “ acts in all points. And because it is found by expe-  
 “ rience that the giving of great fees hath been a mean  
 “ and way to seduce and bring coal-hewers from their  
 “ masters, it is therefore statuted and ordained, that it  
 “ shall not be lawful for any coal-masters in this  
 “ kingdom, to give any greater fee than the sum of  
 “ twenty

“ twenty marks \* in fee or bounteth, under any colour  
 “ or pretext: and because the said coal-hewers and  
 “ salters, and other workmen in coal-heughs within this  
 “ kingdom, do lie from their work at Pasch, Yule,  
 “ Whitsunday, and certain other times in the year,  
 “ which times they employ in drinking and debauchery,  
 “ to the great offence of *God*, and prejudice of their  
 “ masters; it is therefore statuted and ordained, that the  
 “ said colliers shall work all the six days of the week,  
 “ except the time of Christmas, under the pain of twenty  
 “ shillings Scots †, to be paid to their master, for ilk  
 “ day’s failzie, over and above the prejudice sustained by  
 “ their masters, and other punishment of their bodies.”

I will not take upon me to say, that *real slavery* was intended by the legislature of Scotland in passing the foregoing statutes; neither will I venture to determine, whether any who are entitled to all the common privileges and immunities of Britons can be held, by virtue of the said acts, as *slaves for life*, merely because they began to labour in a Scotch colliery or salt-work, and received a six-pence or upwards from the owner or master thereof, as fee or fore-wages: but I think I may justly say, that nothing seems to be wanting in the said acts to constitute *real slavery*, but the name! and that want hath been abundantly supplied by the decisions of their courts of law. The power and commission given to owners and masters of collieries and salt-works to “ apprehend all vagabonds and sturdy beggars to be put to labour,” is truly astonishing; it is nothing less than empowering them to take and hold all such as *slaves for life*: and as every owner and master is, without exception, appointed judge, as well as party, by the act, I presume the mind of man can hardly conceive it possible for any law to be more replete

\* Twenty-two shillings and three-pence farthing.

† Twenty-pence.

with injustice, or dangerous in its consequences. The welfare of the community requires that the executive power should be lodged in impartial and disinterested hands; and justice and equity say, that the nature and quantity of every punishment should be exactly proportioned to the crimes for which they are severally inflicted. What demon then, could first move for the investing of owners and masters of collieries and salt-pans with an unlimited power to punish the bodies of their fellow-subjects!—“*And other punishment of their bodies,*” says the Caledonian legislature, without the least restriction or reserve. But racking upon the wheel is a punishment of the body; and, considering the many instances of abused power, it may perhaps be wondered that no hard-hearted wretch ever proceeded to some such shocking torture, upon a belief, or plea, that it was as much within the meaning of the statute, as the well-known practice of immuring their bodies within the walls of their own prisons.

In my next I shall shew, by an extract from the act passed in the year 1747, abolishing the heritable jurisdictions in Scotland, what hand the British legislature then had in *rivetting the chains* of that class of men whose cause I now plead.

I am, Gentlemen,  
Your most humble and obedient servant,

A FRIEND TO TRUE LIBERTY.

LETTER

## LETTER III.

Gentlemen,

**I**N my last letter I took the liberty of presenting you with exact copies of those acts of the parliament of Scotland upon which the owners and masters of the collieries and salt-works in that country have grounded their right of property in their colliers, coal-bearers, and salters, ever since the year 1606; each owner and master holding and claiming, as his *slaves*, all those who made their first beginning to work within his premises. Some, indeed, have doubted the *legality* of their claim, as founded upon the statutes before quoted, and they hoped, especially since the union with England, that sooner or later there would be a decision in favour of the oppressed. But at the very time they may be supposed to have been warmed with hopes of freedom, their chains were effectually riveted, and riveted by the legislature of Great Britain!

In order to remove such inconveniencies \* as had arisen, and might arise from the multiplicity and extent † of heritable jurisdictions in Scotland; to make satisfaction to the proprietors, and to restore to the crown the powers of jurisdiction originally and properly belonging to it, according to the constitution; and for extending the influence, benefit, and protection of the king's laws and courts of justice to all his majesty's subjects in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, and for rendering the union more complete; an act passed in the year 1747, declaring all heritable jurisdictions,

\* Two very dangerous and unnatural rebellions.

† By a law then in force, every vassal in Scotland who refused to follow his superior forfeited his life.

powers, authorities, and privileges to be abrogated, taken away, dissolved, and extinguished; rents of lands, consisting of money, victual (grain), cattle, or other goods, excepted. But this very act, which freed all others from their destructive vassalage, consigned the poor inoffensive *colliers* to a most *shameful bondage!* Section 21. of that act runs thus:

“ Provided also, that every heritor or proprietor of “ lands in Scotland, within which any coal-works, or “ salt-works, or mines of any kind are or shall be car- “ ried on, shall and may be at liberty to exercise such “ power and jurisdiction as is competent to him by law, “ over the colliers or salters, or other workmen employed “ in carrying on such coal-works, salt-works, or mines, “ any thing herein contained to the contrary notwith- “ standing.”

What an evident and affecting proof is here given of human weakness! If the British legislature really intended, as in the preamble, that the influence, benefit, and protection of the king's laws and courts of justice should be constitutionally extended to all the king's subjects in Scotland, I beg leave to ask, why so many hundreds of those very subjects were cruelly excluded by the fore-cited clause? To say that they had never been, nor were likely to be, in actual rebellion against their king and their country, and, consequently, not so immediately the objects of the act; would surely operate very strongly in their favour, and against the shameful exception.

In the reign of James the First, the parliament of Scotland divested, or rather *robbed*, all colliers, coal-bearers, and salters of their *native liberty*, without assigning the least shadow of reason for their so doing; and the first parliament of Charles the Second placed all watermen, windsmen, and gatesmen in the same predicament, merely because they were “ as necessary to the

“ owners and masters of collieries as the colliers and “ coal-bearers.” But if the being *necessary* to the owners and masters of collieries, be of itself a sufficient reason for adstricting such persons as slaves during life, it is well that miners, blacksmiths, wrights, and farmers were not also included.

I know there are many in Scotland who plead for the necessity of holding the colliers, &c. as *slaves*; and the great benefit which the public receive from coal and salt-works, together with the very disagreeable nature of their business, are the arguments which they advance in proof of such necessity. But surely this reasoning must sound very strangely in a free country; and I am much mistaken if *any* but *capital criminals* are ever so divested of their birth-right, even under the most arbitrary state. If the public be so highly benefitted by works which must prove superlatively disagreeable to those who are employed in them, surely that public, instead of encreasing, should humanely endeavour to alleviate such misery as unavoidably attend them.

How much soever the behaviour of the parliament of Scotland, in this matter, may excite our wonder; that of the British legislature is still more astonishing. The former added watermen, windsmen and gatesmen, to colliers, coal-bearers and salters; but the latter, contrary to the long experience of England, and without being blinded by delusory interest, appears willing to include all who are employed in “ mines of any kind” throughout that country. The one gives power and commission to all owners and masters of collieries to *punish* their unfortunate slaves in their *bodies*, without ascertaining the nature or quantity of such punishment; but the other, in the 22d section of the last mentioned statute, by restraining them from “ trying, judging, or determining “ in any case whatsoever, inferring the *loss of life or*

“ *dismemberment*,” allows them to proceed to the infliction of every less punishment. I am sorry that any law, so essentially unconstitutional, should ever have disgraced a British statute-book; and it pains me to think, that in the 20th of George the Second, the legislature of this free country acted so unworthy the character of Britons and of men.

*Slave* is an epithet universally odious; and as all who are unfortunately under that appellation are excluded from social intercourse with the rest of their own species, adult persons are effectually deterred from entering to work in either coal or salt works; hence the end which the legislature and others had principally in view, becomes in a great measure defeated, by the very means intended to promote it. Such an aversion have persons of the meanest circumstances to *slavery*, that colliers have been, and now are, extremely scarce in Scotland; and had not the helpless children, through the necessitous circumstances of their collier parents, been put to that work before they were of age to judge for themselves, perhaps all Scotland could not at this time produce three colliers, who had not been forced into the business as vagabonds or sturdy beggars, by virtue of that amazing commission given to owners and masters of collieries, in the act of Charles the Second.

As the nature of the colliery business makes it necessary that they should be paid by the quantity of coals wrought, and not according to the time they are employed in working them; such colliers as are expert and industrious make very good wages: and I have heard several in Scotland say, that, looking upon the coal-working business as being very profitable, they would immediately engage in it, but for the *disgraceful slavery* which attended it. They well knew, that he with whom they should first work, would claim them as his  
slaves

*slaves* for ever after ; and, being unable to submit to such a hateful bondage, they determined to forego those advantages, which otherwise would have been very acceptable.

The matter now in agitation before you, gentlemen, is of the utmost importance to all the colliers, coal-bearers, and salters in Scotland ; and your decision may probably fix their fate for ages to come. If you raise them to a state of equality in law with the other labourers in that country, by totally abolishing every statute now particularly affecting them, their numbers will soon abound ; a thousand grateful hearts will ardently invoke all-bounteous Heaven in behalf of their kind *deliverers* ; and the names of those gentlemen who first moved your assembly to take cognizance of their unconstitutional and inhuman sufferings, will be transmitted to their posterity with honour and applause. If, through their ill design, the redress now sought should be rendered *partial and inadequate*, their names will nevertheless be transmitted from one generation to another ; but, in such case, it will be as *Pontius Pilate is recorded in the Apostles Creed.*

Having mentioned the decisions of the courts of law in Scotland, as declarative of the legality of holding all their colliers and coal-bearers in *perpetual slavery*, I shall beg leave, in my next, to shew the justice of that assertion, by presenting you with a case, as set forth in a petition to the lords of council and session in the year 1764.

I remain, with due respect,

Gentlemen,

Your most humble servant,

A FRIEND to TRUE LIBERTY.

## LETTER IV.

Gentlemen,

WHEN I first addressed you in behalf of the poor Scotch colliers, coal-bearers, and salters, I entertained the highest opinion of your wisdom as legislators, attachment to liberty as Britons, and feelings of humanity as men. Fully persuaded that the cause in which I engaged was good, and that the much-injured subjects were well entitled to your immediate and effectual interposition, I flattered myself that, remembering the glorious struggles of our fore-fathers, an emulation worthy of Britons would have actuated every member of your assembly; and that slavery, substance and shadow, would have been driven like chaff before the storm, never to be found again within the British isle.—But alas! How uncertain are all sublunary things!

A petition from the proprietors of the collieries and salt-works in Scotland was laid before you, and what hath been the consequence? Why, nothing less than a turning from the humane and important business for this session; perhaps for ever. Thus you are imposed upon, deceived, and disgraced; the friends of liberty are disappointed; and that class of men, whose cause I have endeavoured to plead, are prevented from recovering one of the most indisputable privileges of Britons: they are denied the common rights of men; and shamefully left to languish under the iron hand of slavery and oppression.

You, gentlemen, are now at liberty to chuse the rural retreat, or the busy world; the country villa, or the places

places of more social and gay amusement; whilst those miserable Britons, on whom you have lately turned your backs, are cruelly confined within those narrow spaces which join the subterraneous caverns where they work, to their nocturnal abodes.—When any colliers in Scotland, are found at a distance from that particular coal, or salt-work, to which they first entered, they are seized as the unquestionable property of their masters, reputed as thieves, thrown into jail, and otherwise punished in their bodies, by virtue of that infamous act of James the First. All the petitioners know this to be irrefragably true; and yet they have had the effrontery to tell you, that the unhappy subjects of such unconstitutional and inhuman treatment, “ are not in a state of “ slavery !”

I hope, gentlemen, you will not think that I have gone too far in behalf of my poor clients; I have heard the groaning of the miserable prisoners, and seen the distresses of their helpless families: I know the fatal effects of the arbitrary disposition and mistaken notions of their inexorable masters; and ardently wish that a period may soon be put to such inhuman proceedings. Sorry I am to find, that a bondage, sufficient to disgrace the most arbitrary state, should be countenanced in a land so justly famed for liberty; and it grieves me to think, that, in the country which gave me birth, so many advocates should be found for slavery and oppression. Surely those who deny the inherent privileges of Britons to others, may justly be deemed unworthy of the enjoyment themselves.

At your next meeting, gentlemen, I intend to present you with a few strictures upon the very extraordinary petition mentioned above; and, as every writer ought to be responsible for what he advances, I shall not only appear

appear under my real signature, but also hold myself in readiness to bear testimony at your bar, if required, against that group of falsehoods and inconsistencies.— In the mean time I remain, with the greatest respect,

Gentlemen,

Your most humble servant,

A FRIEND to TRUE LIBERTY.

*Note.* The parliament having been dissolved before the next session, an act was passed by the new parliament, in which it is enacted, “That no person, who, after July 1, 1775, shall begin to work as a collier or salter in Scotland, to be bound in any other way than other servants. — That all bound colliers, &c. under the age of twenty-one years, on the said first day of July, shall be free after serving seven years; those who are above the age of twenty-one, and under thirty-five, after ten years; those between thirty-five and forty-five, after serving seven years; and those above forty five, after three years.— That each collier and salter shall, if required, instruct an apprentice; and in case of refusing, to perform an additional service of three years.”— In justice to the following gentlemen, it is sufficient to say, that this laudable bill was prepared and brought into the house by James Montgomery, esq. (then lord advocate of Scotland) Sir Alexander Gilmour, and Sir Archibald Edmonstone.

F I N I S.

